



THORGAL

The Blade Ship

ARTWORK

G. ROSINSKI - Y. SENTE

SCRIPT



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The series *Thorgal* was created by writer
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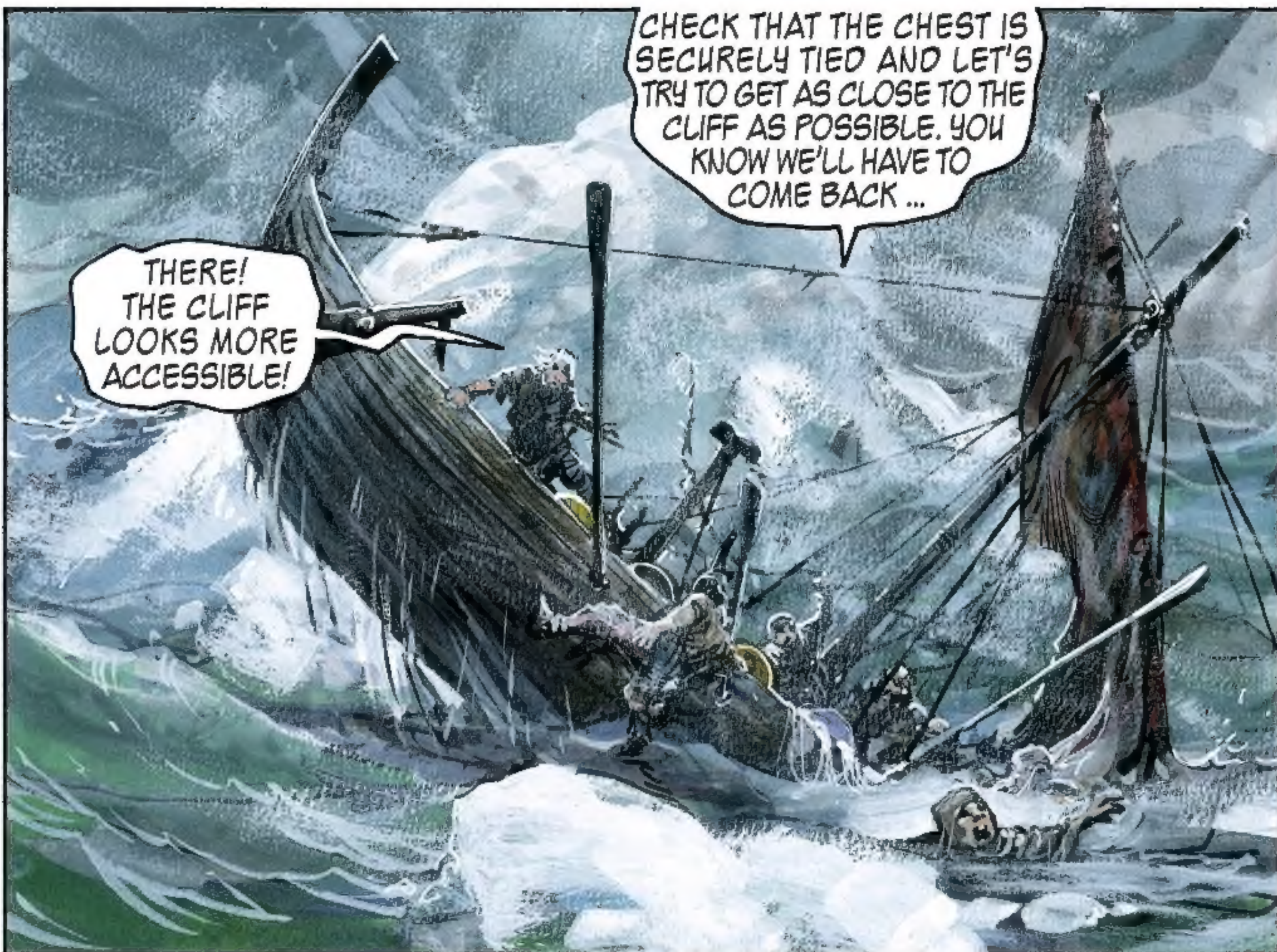


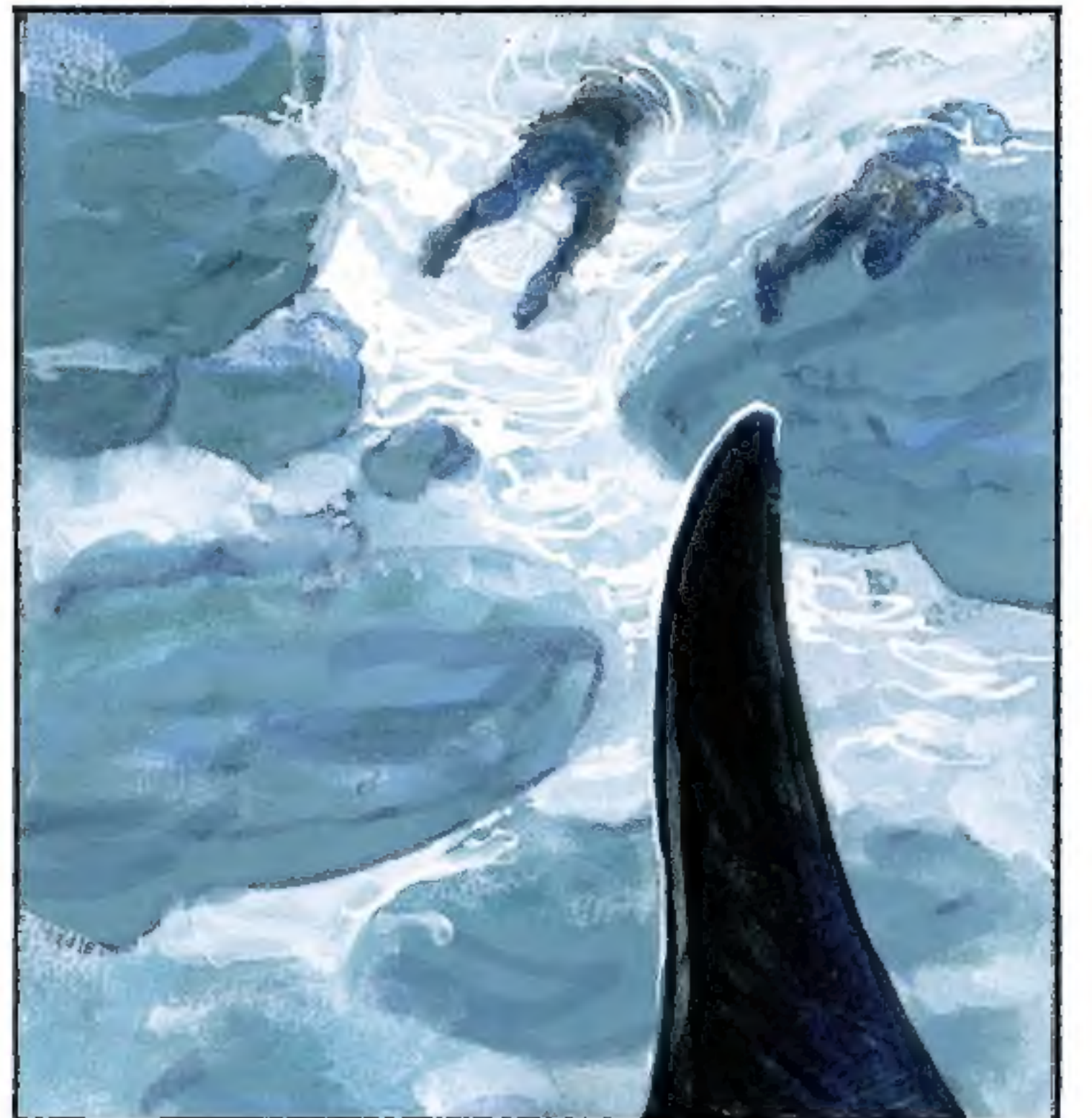
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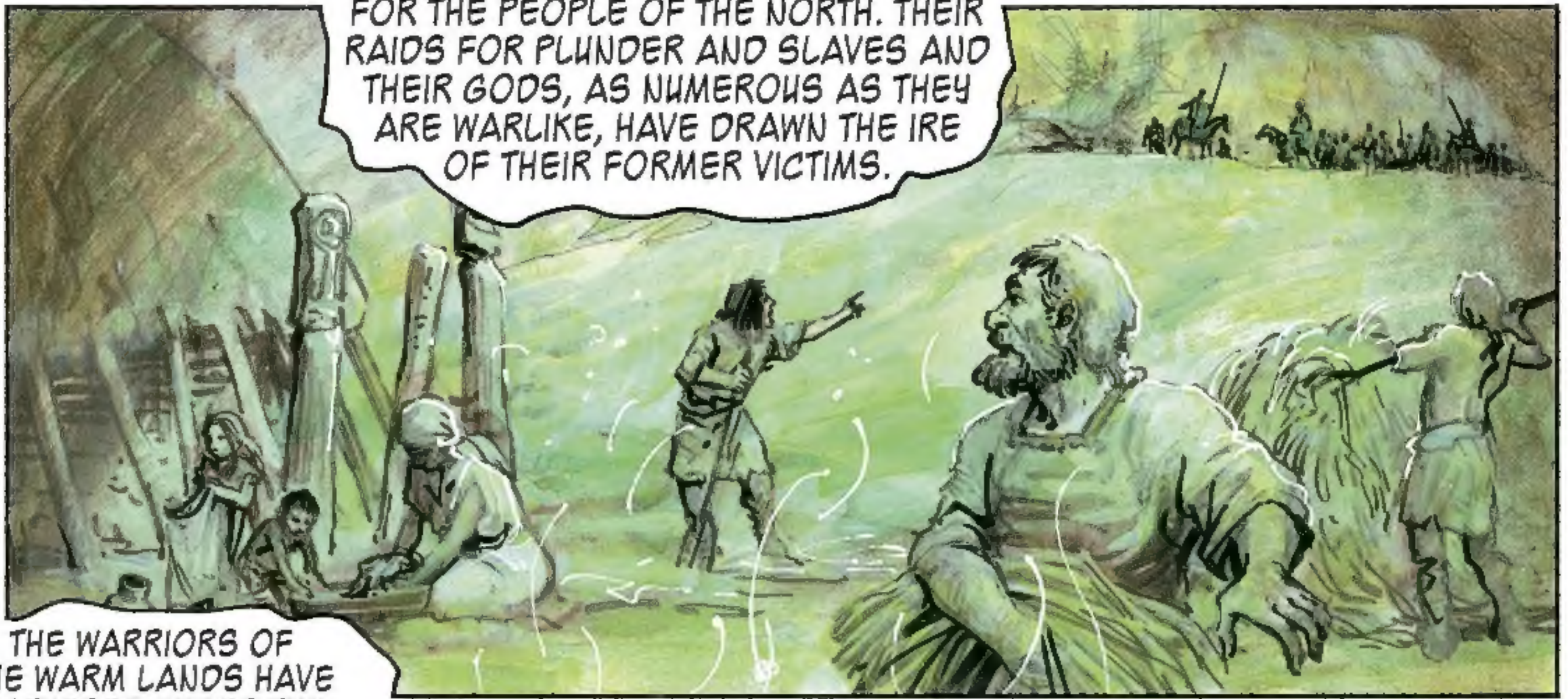
COME CLOSER, AND DISCOVER ONE OF THE INCREDIBLE POWERS OF RED MAGIC. LOOK, AND LISTEN ...



*SEE VOLUME 21.



YOU HAVE ALL PROVEN YOUR COURAGE, AND YOU ALL DESERVE TO HAVE AN EXCEPTIONAL FATE.



GREAT CHANGES ARE COMING FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE NORTH. THEIR RAIDS FOR PLUNDER AND SLAVES AND THEIR GODS, AS NUMEROUS AS THEY ARE WARLIKE, HAVE DRAWN THE IRE OF THEIR FORMER VICTIMS.

THE WARRIORS OF THE WARM LANDS HAVE GATHERED UNDER THE BANNER OF THEIR EMPEROR MAGNUS.



THOSE SOLDIERS, HELPED BY THEIR ONE GOD, ARE IN THE PROCESS OF DEFEATING THE VIKINGS.



THEY ONLY HAVE ONE GOD?!

WHAT CAN HE DO AGAINST ALL THE DEITIES OF ASGARD?

DON'T BET ON IT.

THAT GOD MAY HAVE BEEN LUCKY SO FAR, BUT OUR GODS WILL MAKE SHORT WORK OF HIM ONCE THEY—





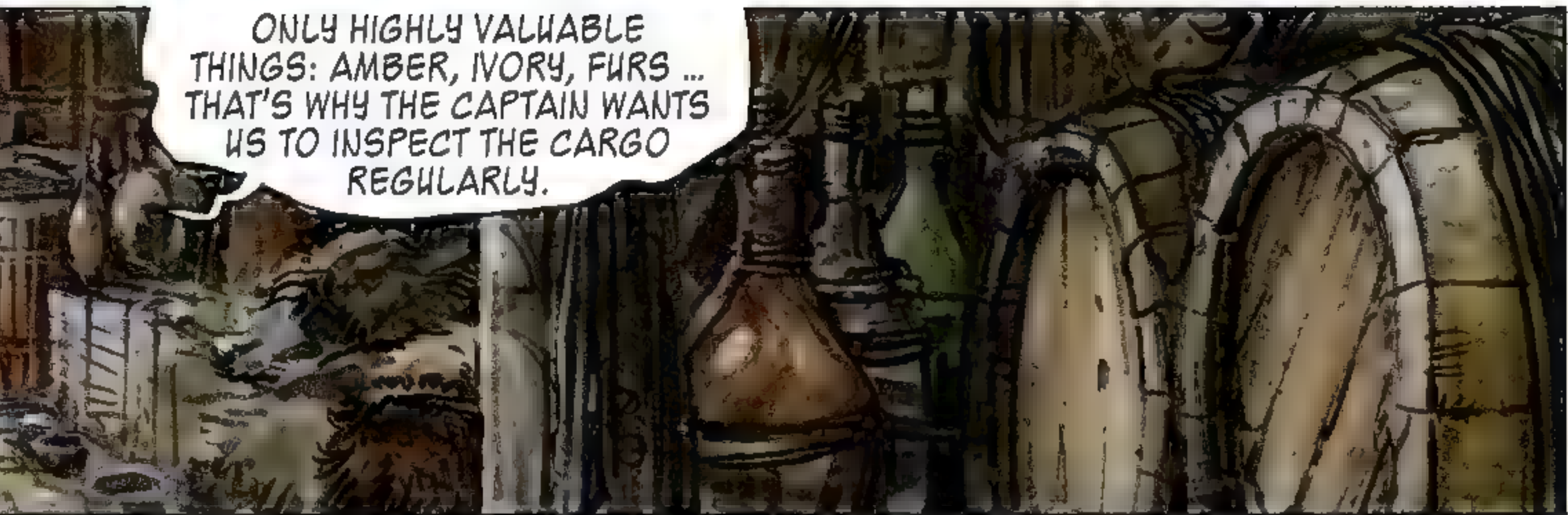
*SEE VOLUMES 21 TO 24.



TELL ME, PETROV:
DO YOU KNOW WHAT
GOODS ARE IN
THE HOLD?



ONLY HIGHLY VALUABLE
THINGS: AMBER, IVORY, FURS ...
THAT'S WHY THE CAPTAIN WANTS
US TO INSPECT THE CARGO
REGULARLY.



WHAT IS HE AFRAID OF? THAT
A PASSENGER MIGHT HOIST A CRATE
ONTO HIS BACK, JUMP INTO FREEZING
WATER, MANAGE TO SWIM ASHORE,
AND ESCAPE ALONE ACROSS THOSE
SNOW-COVERED WASTES?



YOU'RE
NOT FAR FROM
THE TR —

MASTER PETROV!
WE'RE ALMOST
THERE. I ... I THINK
I SAW ONE! ...



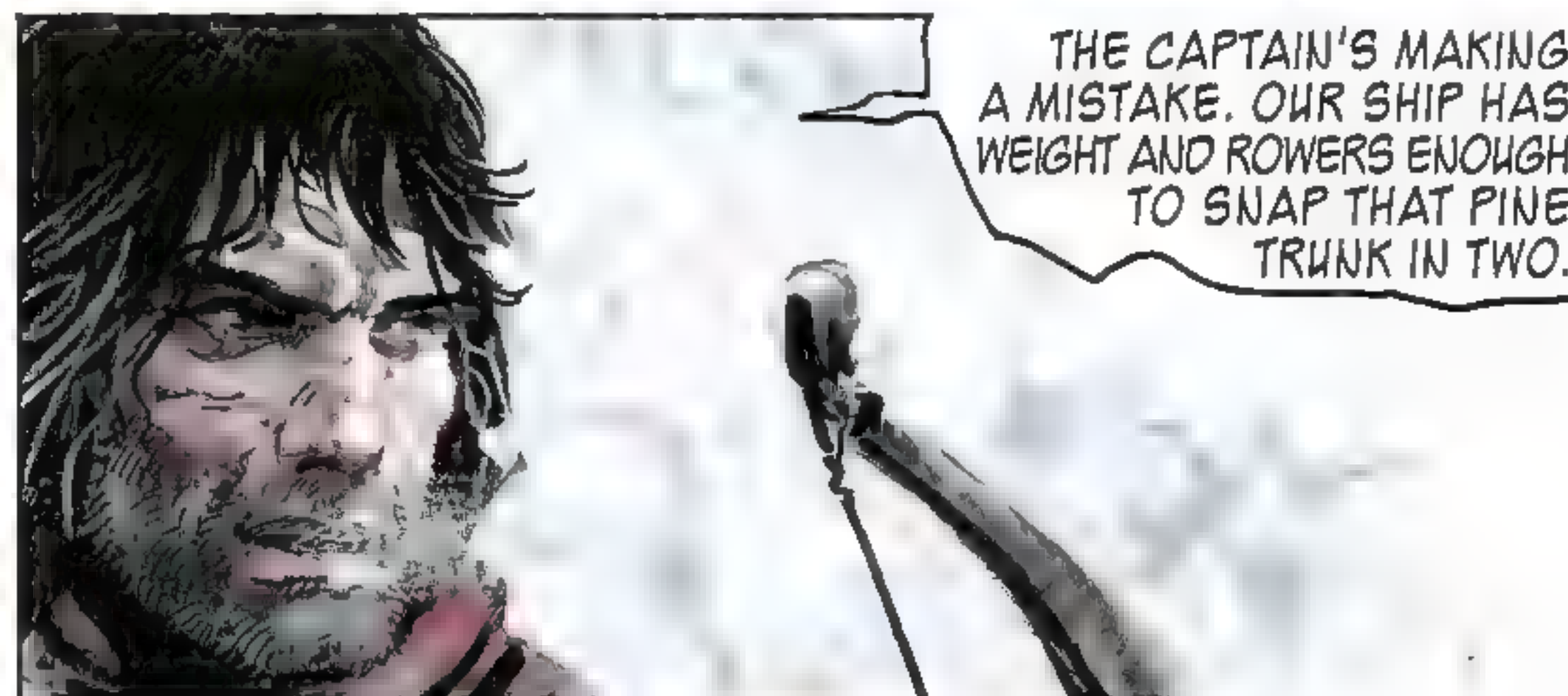
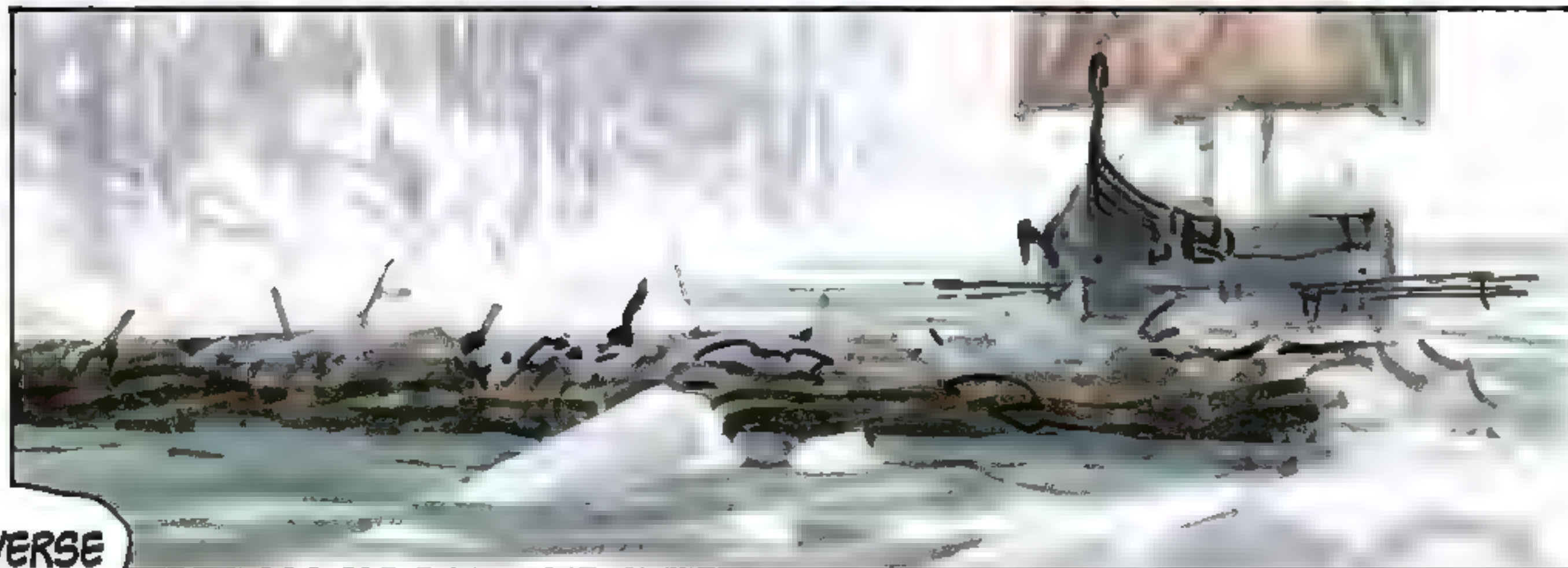
WHAT DOES THAT
SAILOR THINK
HE SAW?



BACK IT
UP! HURRY!



FULL REVERSE
SPEED!



THE CAPTAIN'S MAKING
A MISTAKE. OUR SHIP HAS
WEIGHT AND ROWERS ENOUGH
TO SNAP THAT PINE
TRUNK IN TWO.

ARE YOU SURE?



AS SURE AS I AM
THAT IF WE STOP,
WE'LL HAVE TO KILL
THEM ALL BEFORE
WE CAN KEEP
GOING ...

TO YOUR OARS! FULL
SPEED AHEAD -- AND PUT
YOUR BACKS INTO IT!



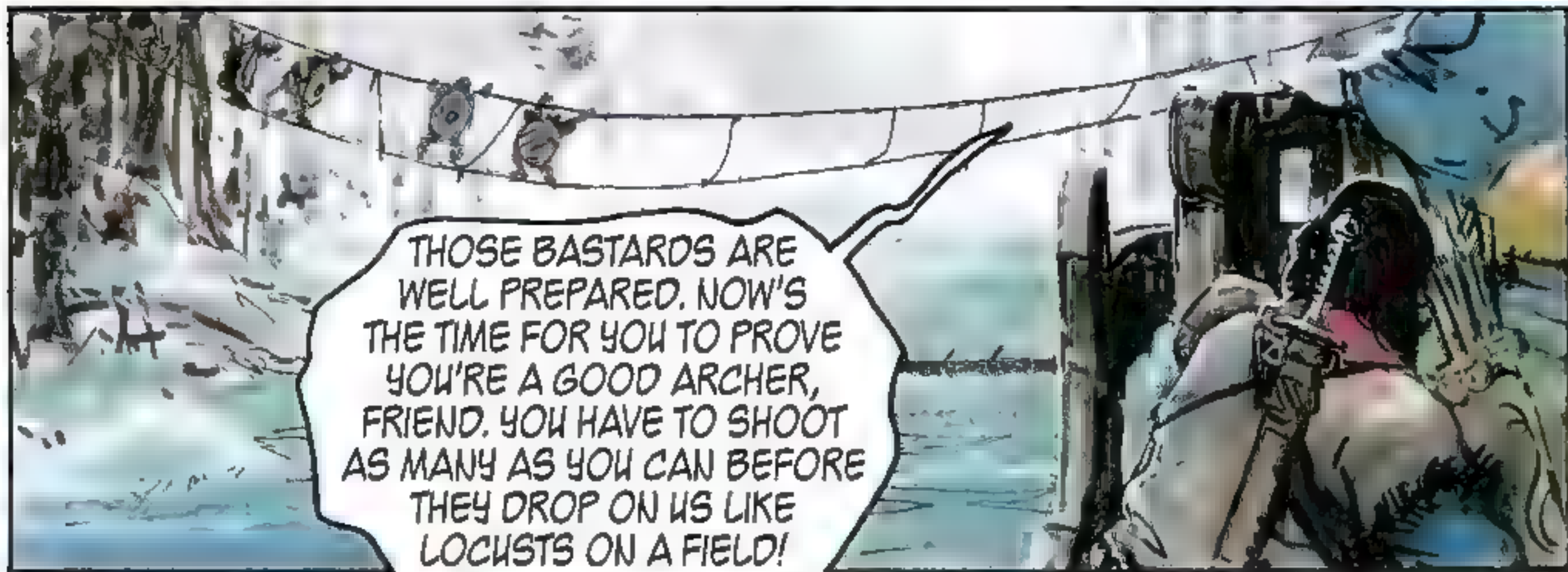
HUH?! ... WHAT ARE
YOU DOING? I AM THE
ONE WHO GIVES --

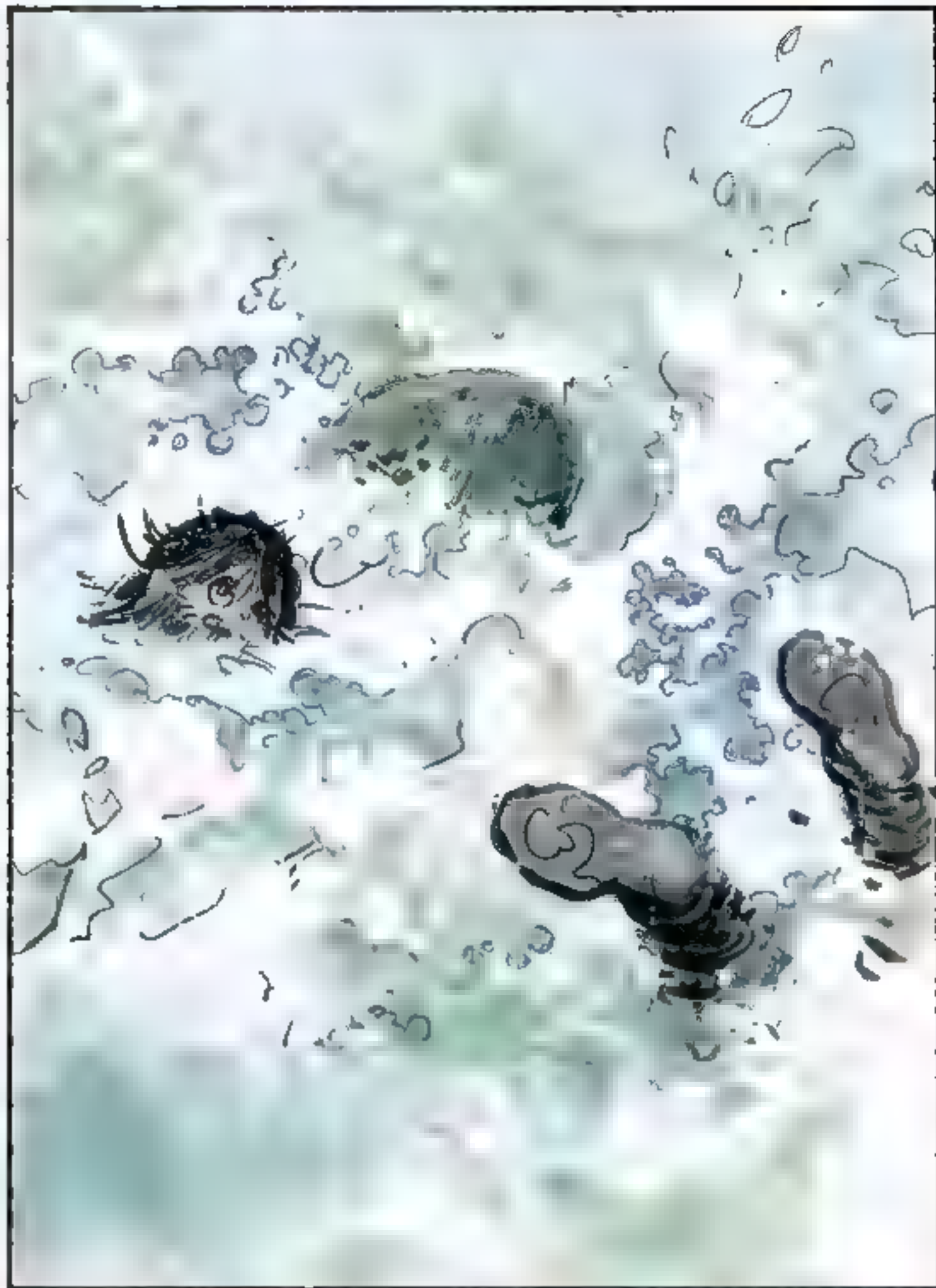
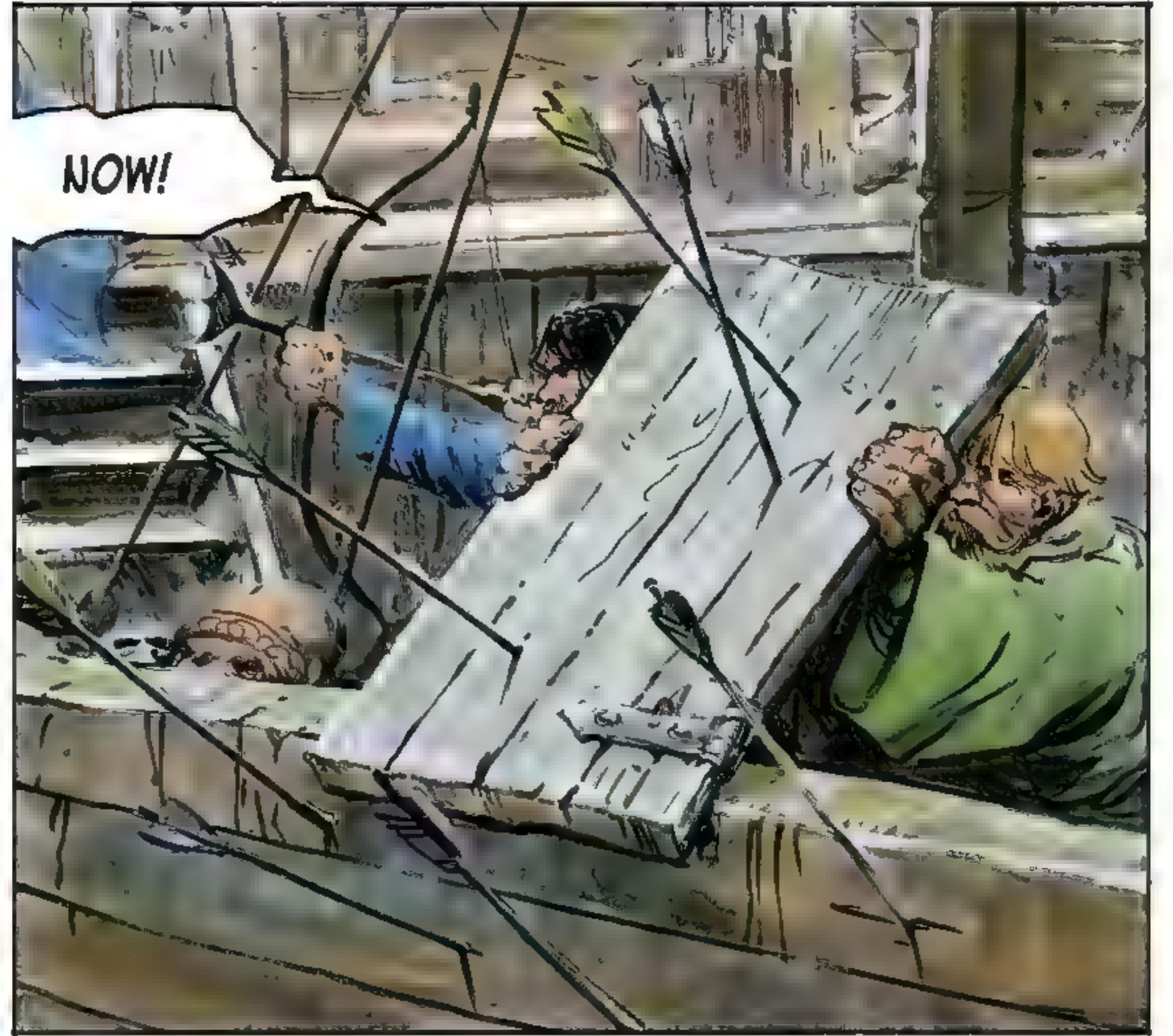
SORRY, CAPTAIN, BUT
THE RULE IN CASE OF
DANGER IS THAT I'M
IN CHARGE. I SAY WE
BARGE THROUGH AND
SMASH THE OBSTACLE!



BELAY LAST
ORDER! FULL
SPEED AHEAD!









THEY'RE THROUGH! WE FAILED ...

NOT YET. WE STILL HAVE OLEV AND PÆR ...

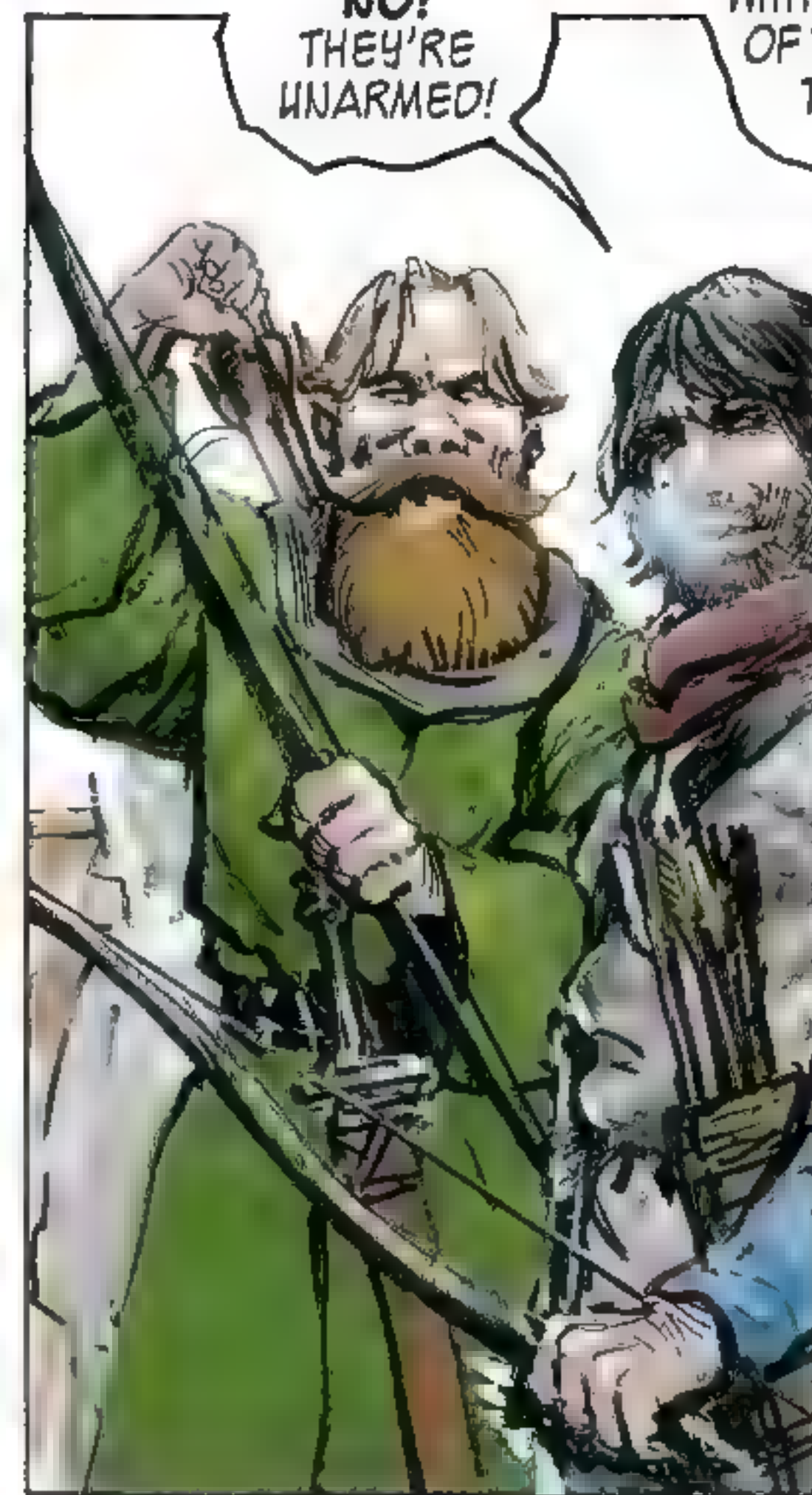


HOOORRAY! WE'RE THROUGH! WELL DONE, THORGAL!

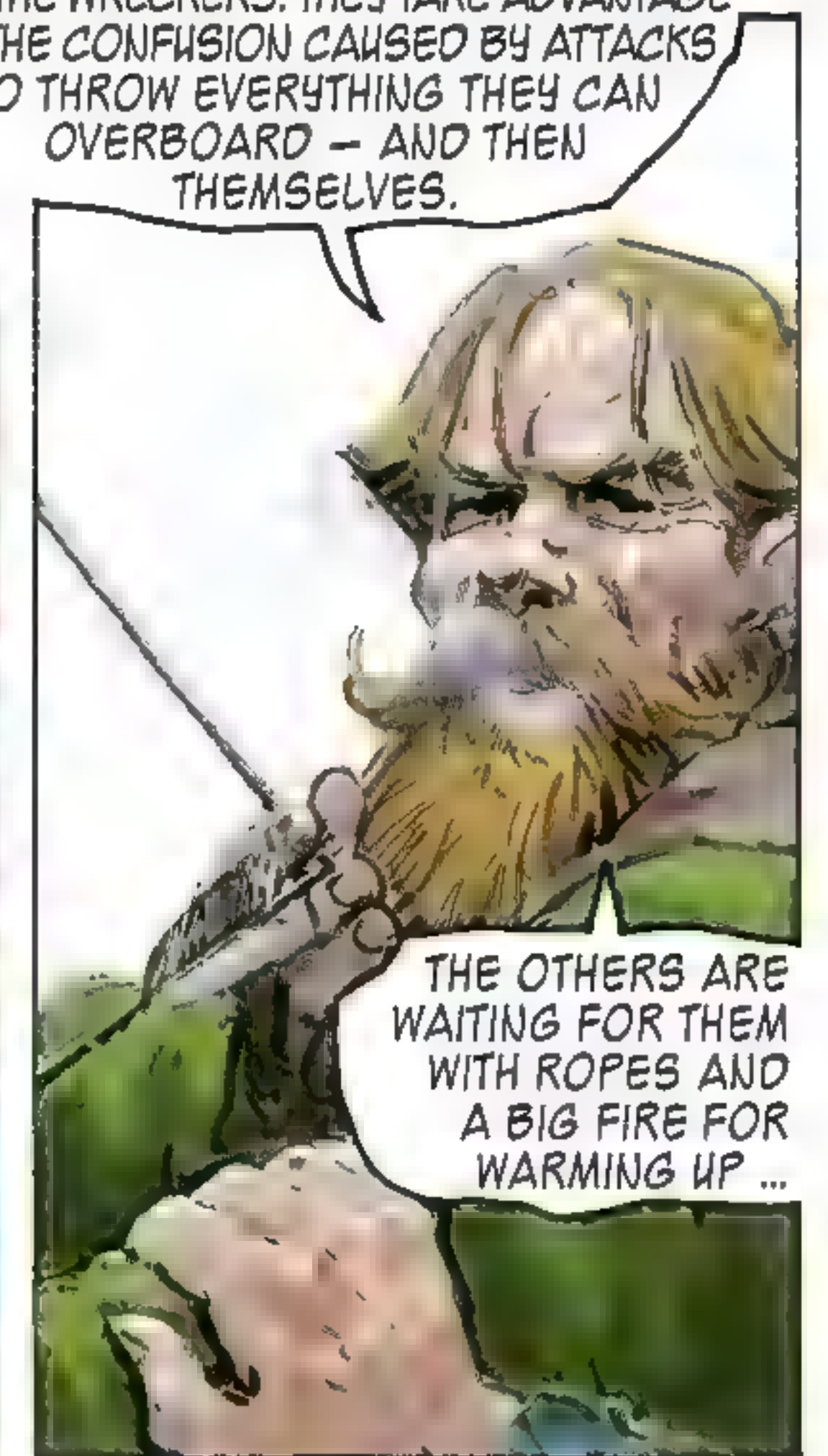
THAT'S WHAT I MEANT TO EXPLAIN BACK IN THE HOLD. THOSE LADS ARE WORKING WITH THE WRECKERS. THEY TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE CONFUSION CAUSED BY ATTACKS TO THROW EVERYTHING THEY CAN OVERBOARD - AND THEN THEMSELVES.



BY ALL THE HAIR IN LOKI'S GOATEE!



NO! THEY'RE UNARMED!



THE OTHERS ARE WAITING FOR THEM WITH ROPES AND A BIG FIRE FOR WARMING UP ...



A FIRE? WELL, THAT'S DIFFERENT, THEN ...



I THINK YOU TWO KNOW WHAT YOU SHOULD DO, NOW ...



HA! HA! HA!
HA! HA!

I WOULDN'T HAVE
LET YOU SHOOT
THEM. I DISLIKE
UNNECESSARY
KILLING.

YOU REALLY ARE
A MOST UNUSUAL
VIKING, THORGAL. THE
FIRST PACIFIST ONE
I'VE EVER MET ...

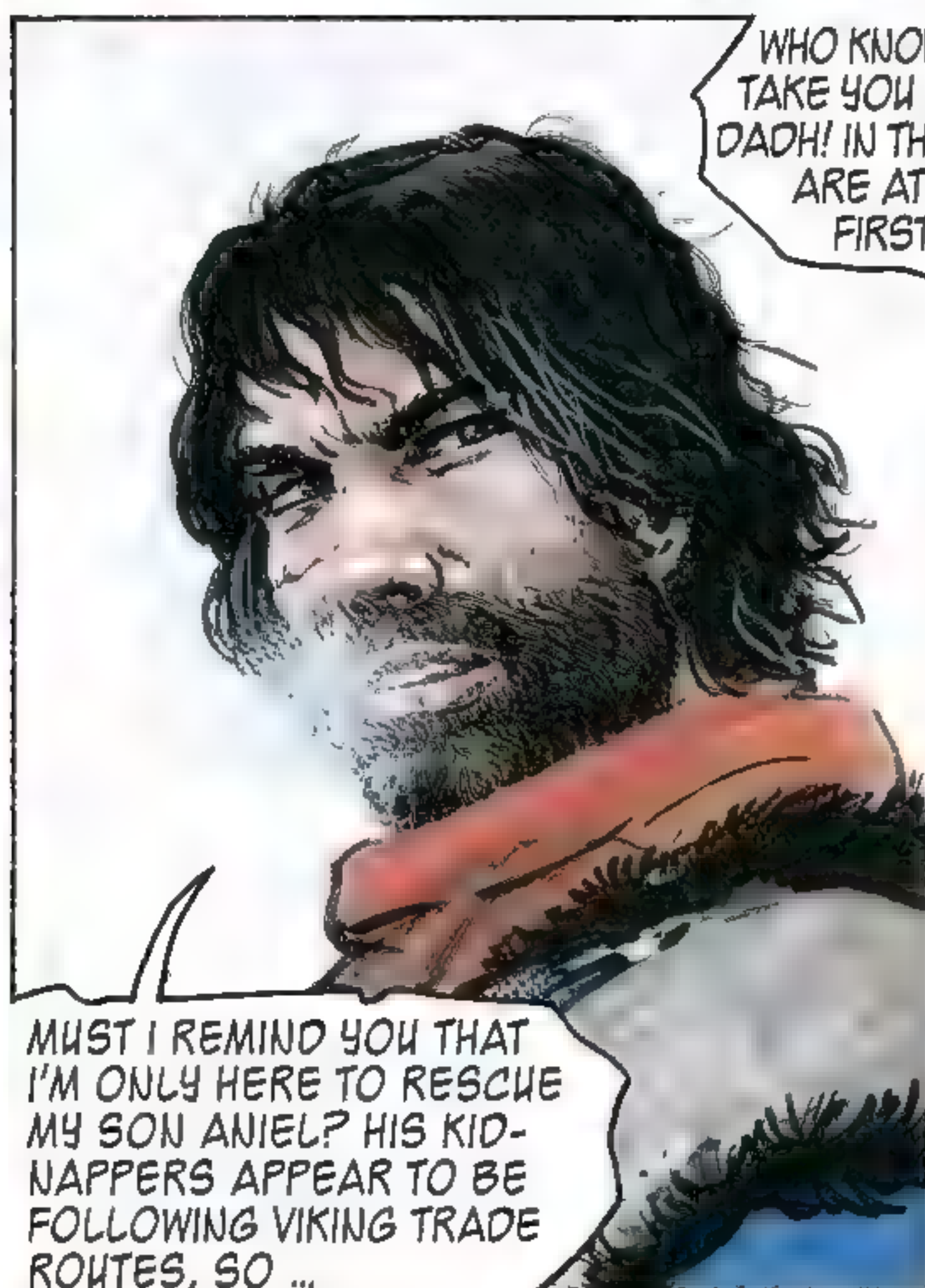


I CAN STILL SEE THEM JUMPING
OVERBOARD AS ONE! I WAS
LAUGHING SO HARD I COULDN'T
EVEN AIM AT THEM!
HA! HA! HA!

YOU'RE NOT THE FIRST TO
SAY THAT TO ME. THAT'S
JUST HOW IT IS. I USE MY
BOW TO FEED OR PROTECT
MY FAMILY. I WAS A SKALD,
YOU KNOW, BACK WHEN
I LIVED ALONE ...



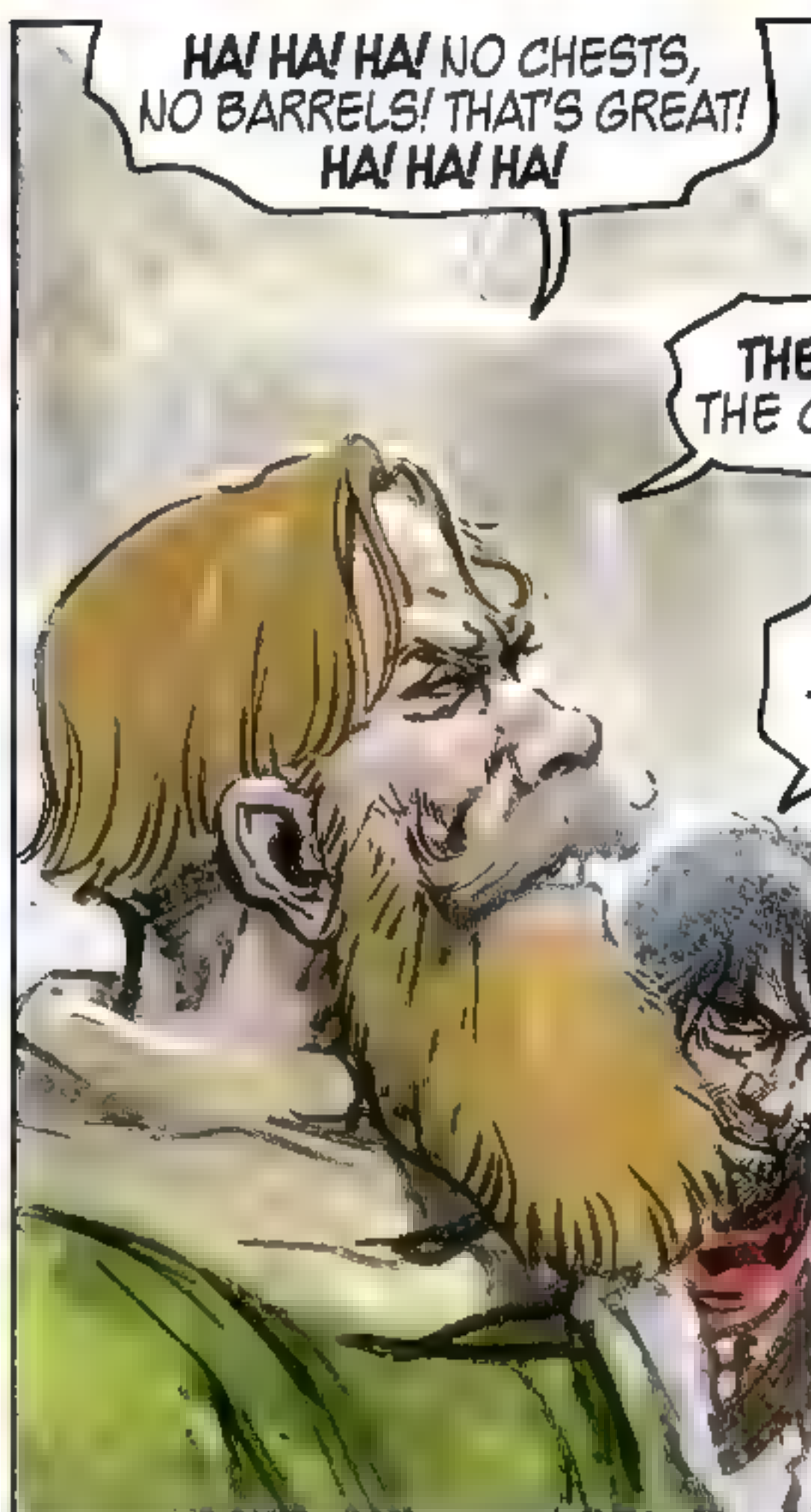
YET, HIRING YOURSELF OUT
TO DEFEND A SHIP, ITS CARGO,
AND ITS PASSENGERS IS NO
JOB FOR A MUSICIAN OR A
PEACEFUL FISHERMAN.



MUST I REMIND YOU THAT
I'M ONLY HERE TO RESCUE
MY SON ANIEL? HIS KID-
NAPPERS APPEAR TO BE
FOLLOWING VIKING TRADE
ROUTES, SO ...

WHO KNOWS? PERHAPS THEY'LL
TAKE YOU ALL THE WAY TO BAG
DADH! IN THE MEANTIME, HERE WE
ARE AT NOVGHOREV, OUR
FIRST STOP. BEHOLD!







LISTEN TO ME, YOU PIG-HEADED FOOL, AND THEN YOU CAN DO WHAT YOU WANT. FIRST, ALL YOUR WONDERFUL PRINCIPLES AREN'T GOING TO STOP THE SLAVE TRADE.

SECOND, IF YOU GET OFF, YOU'LL BE LOSING YOUR SPOT ON THE BLADE SHIP, ALONG WITH ONE OF YOUR LAST CHANCES TO NOT FALL TOO FAR BEHIND THOSE WHO TOOK YOUR SON. SO, THINK THIS THROUGH!



HEY, YOU TWO! I DON'T PAY YOU TO FIGHT LIKE ROWDY BOYS! KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE INCOMING GOODS!



DID YOU SEE THAT, THORGAL? THOSE EYES! ONLY THE ORIENT CAN OFFER SUCH INTENSITY!



YOU'RE WRONG THERE. MY WIFE HAS EYES THAT CAN CLEAVE YOU IN TWO AS SURELY AS THE KEENEST OF BLADES.



THORGAL? IS ... IS THAT YOU, THORGAL?



DO I KNOW YOU?

THORGAL!
AT LAST, THE GODS
HAVE HEARD ME!
IT'S ME, LEHLAI*



LEHLAI! HOW ... ? YOUR
BROTHER ... IS DAREK
HERE AS WELL?

YOU! LEAVE!
DON'T TOUCH THE
GOODS!

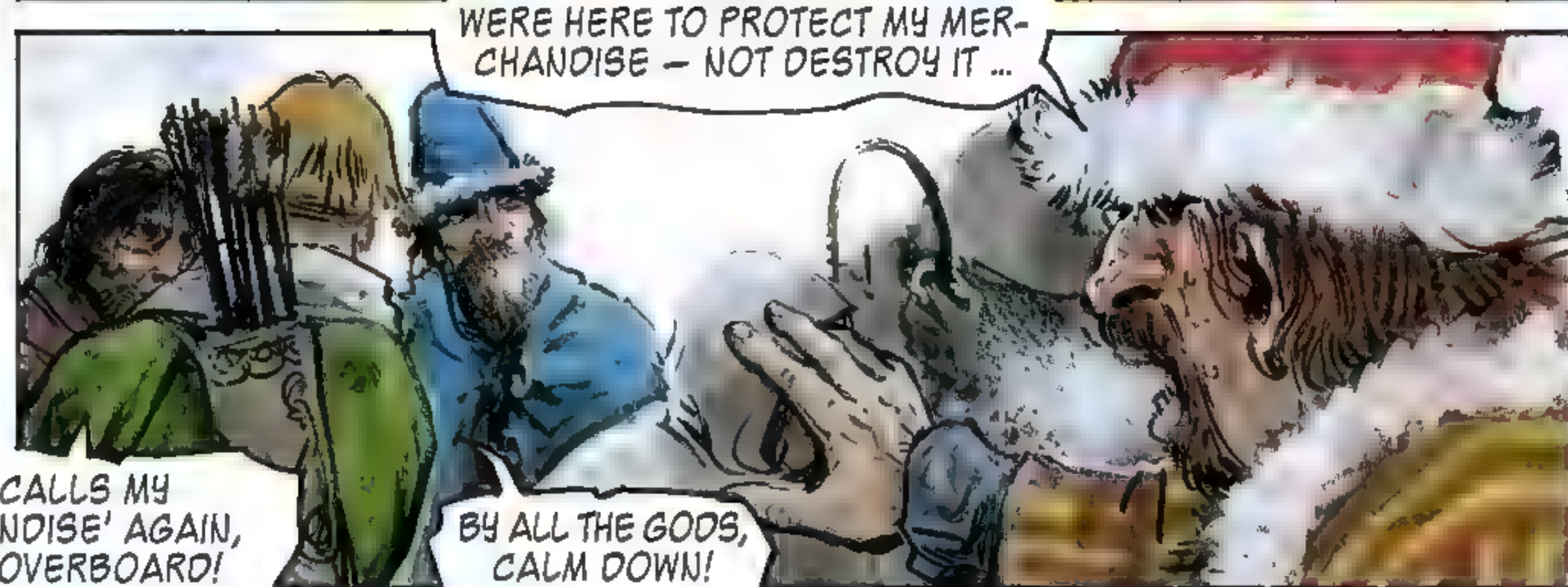


WHAT DID YOU
JUST SAY?

NO TOUCHING THE
GOODS! LEAVE,
OR ELSE ...



BACK! GET BACK!
TO YOUR POSTS!



CAPTAIN! I THOUGHT THESE MEN
WERE HERE TO PROTECT MY MER-
CHANDISE - NOT DESTROY IT ...

BY ALL THE GODS,
CALM DOWN!

IF THAT MAN CALLS MY
FRIEND 'MERCHANDISE' AGAIN,
I'LL THROW HIM OVERBOARD!

THE LAWS OF THE ALTHING ARE ON MY SIDE,
STRANGER. SHE'S AN EXILE AND I CAPTURED
HER. I HAVE THE RIGHT TO SELL HER TO WHOM-
EVER I PLEASE ... INCLUDING YOU, IF SHE MEANS
SO MUCH TO YOU. AND IF YOU CAN AFFORD
IT, OF COURSE - FIVE GOLD CROWNS.



COME AND SEE ME WHEN
YOU HAVE THEM. OTHERWISE
... NO MERCY FOR THE
POOR! HUH! HUH!

*SEE VOLUMES 12 TO 17.

YOU'RE LUCKY YOU DID GOOD AGAINST THE PEOPLE OF THE WHITE STEPPES, OR I WOULD FIRE YOU! GET OVER THERE AND HELP THAT MERCHANT BRING HIS SLED ON BOARD.



GO ON, DOGS!
HACK! HAAACK!
HACK! ... FORWARD!
COUGH! COUGH!
COUGH!



AH, NOW,
THIS I CAN
DO. WATCH.

YAAAAAH!
YAAAAAH,
YOU DOGS!

COUGH!
COUGH!
COUGH!



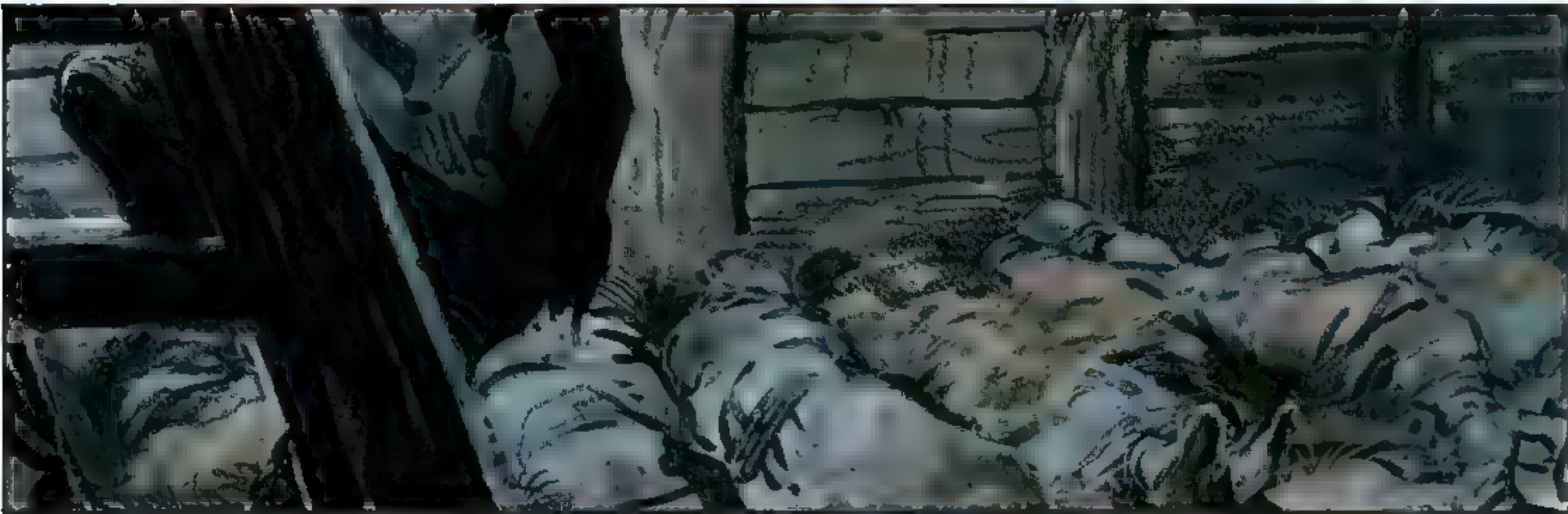
WHO ARE
THEY? MORE
SLAVES?



NO. JUDGING BY THE MARK ON THEIR FOREHEADS,
THOSE ARE ESCAPED KAKHAZ CRIMINALS. SULTAN
IBNAICHA OF KAKHAZAN VALUES HIS REPUTATION.
ALL ESCAPED CRIMINALS ARE RELENTLESSLY
HUNTED DOWN BY HIS SPECIAL GUARDS.

FROM WHAT I HEARD, THEY'D
HAVE BEEN BETTER OFF DYING
THAN GETTING RECAPTURED
... ANYWAY, COME! WE'RE
ABOUT TO SET SAIL.





THORGAL! I KNEW YOU'D COME! DON'T LEAVE ME HERE! I HAVE TO —

SHHH. THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO FOR NOW, BUT I'LL FIND A WAY TO BUY YOUR FREEDOM. TRUST ME, ALL RIGHT?



I PROMISE! WHY ARE YOU HERE, THOUGH? HOW ARE AARICIA AND WOLFCUB? AND ... JOLAN?

THEY'RE WELL, AS FAR AS I KNOW. I HAD TO LEAVE THEM TO GO LOOKING FOR MY YOUNGER SON ANIEL.



HE WAS KIDNAPPED BY MEN WHO CALL THEMSELVES RED MAGES. I'LL TELL YOU ALL ABOUT IT LATER, ONCE YOU'RE FREE.



YOU DON'T LOOK SO GOOD, OLD MAN. HOW ABOUT SOME GROG?

COUGH! ... COUGH! COUGH!



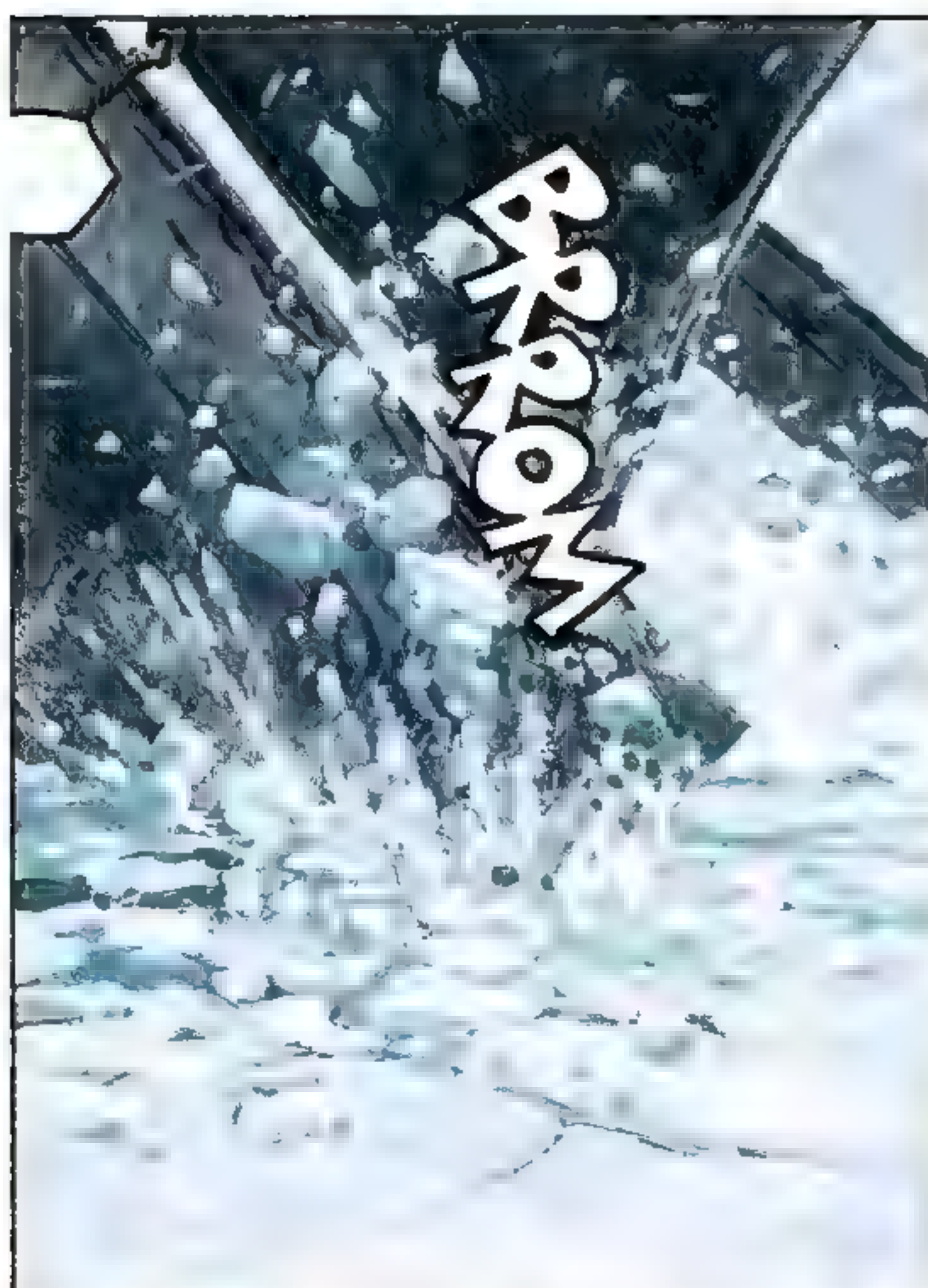
I'VE BEEN SICK FOR A WEEK ... AND GETTING WORSE. I ... COUGH! I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO DELIVER MY GOODS TOMORROW. IT'S ... COUGH! COUGH! ... A DISASTER FOR THE PEOPLE OF BROJIEV ...

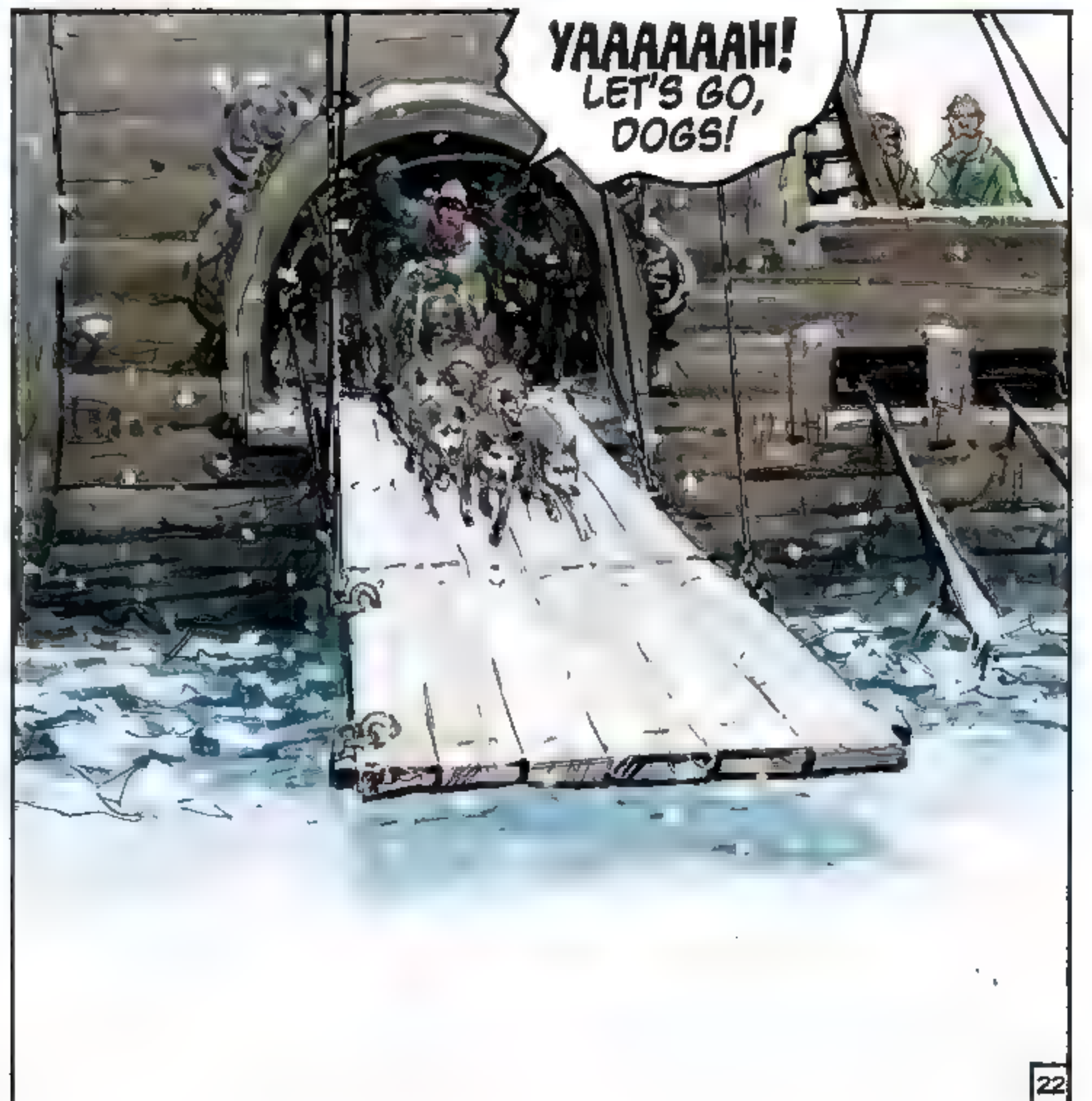
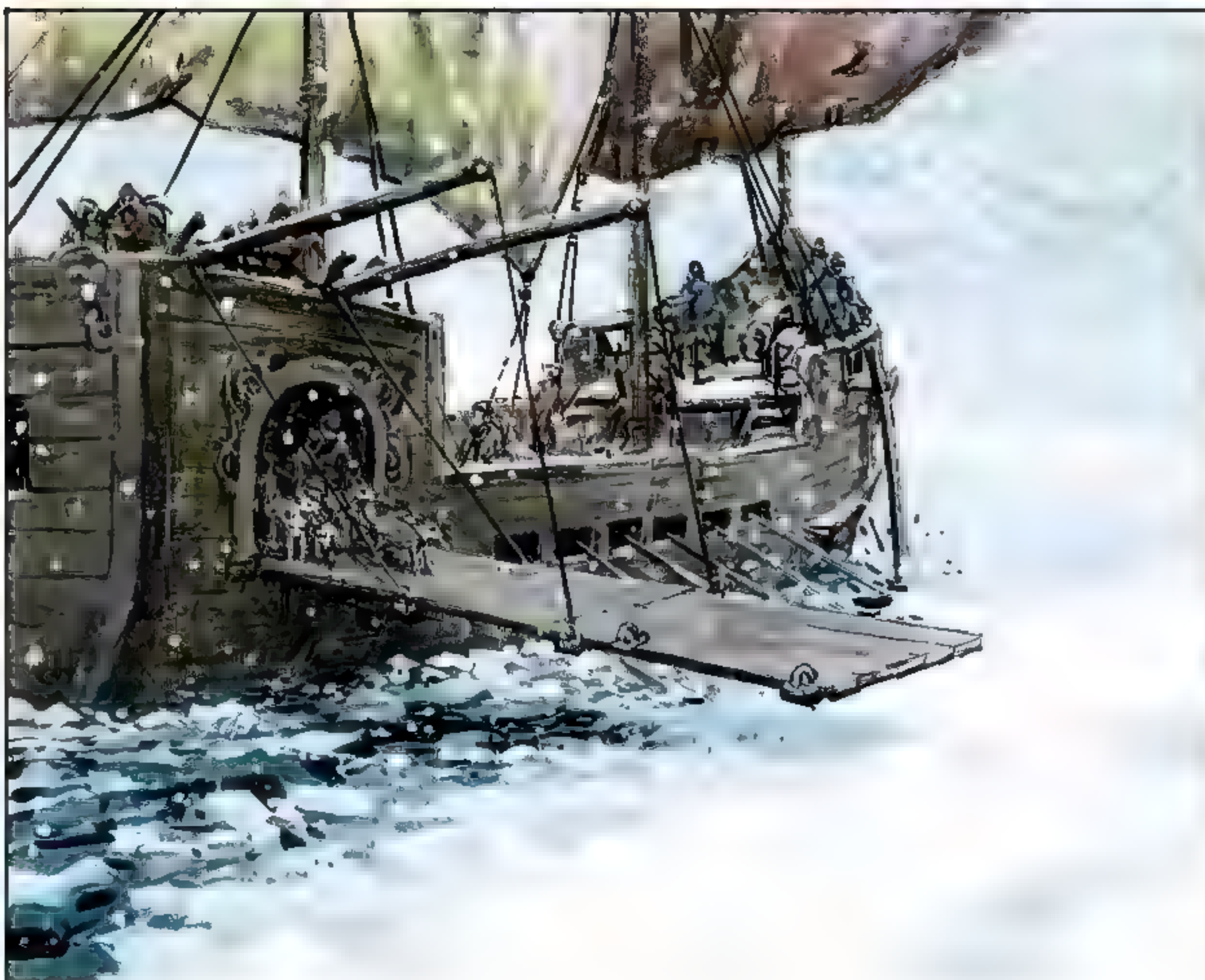
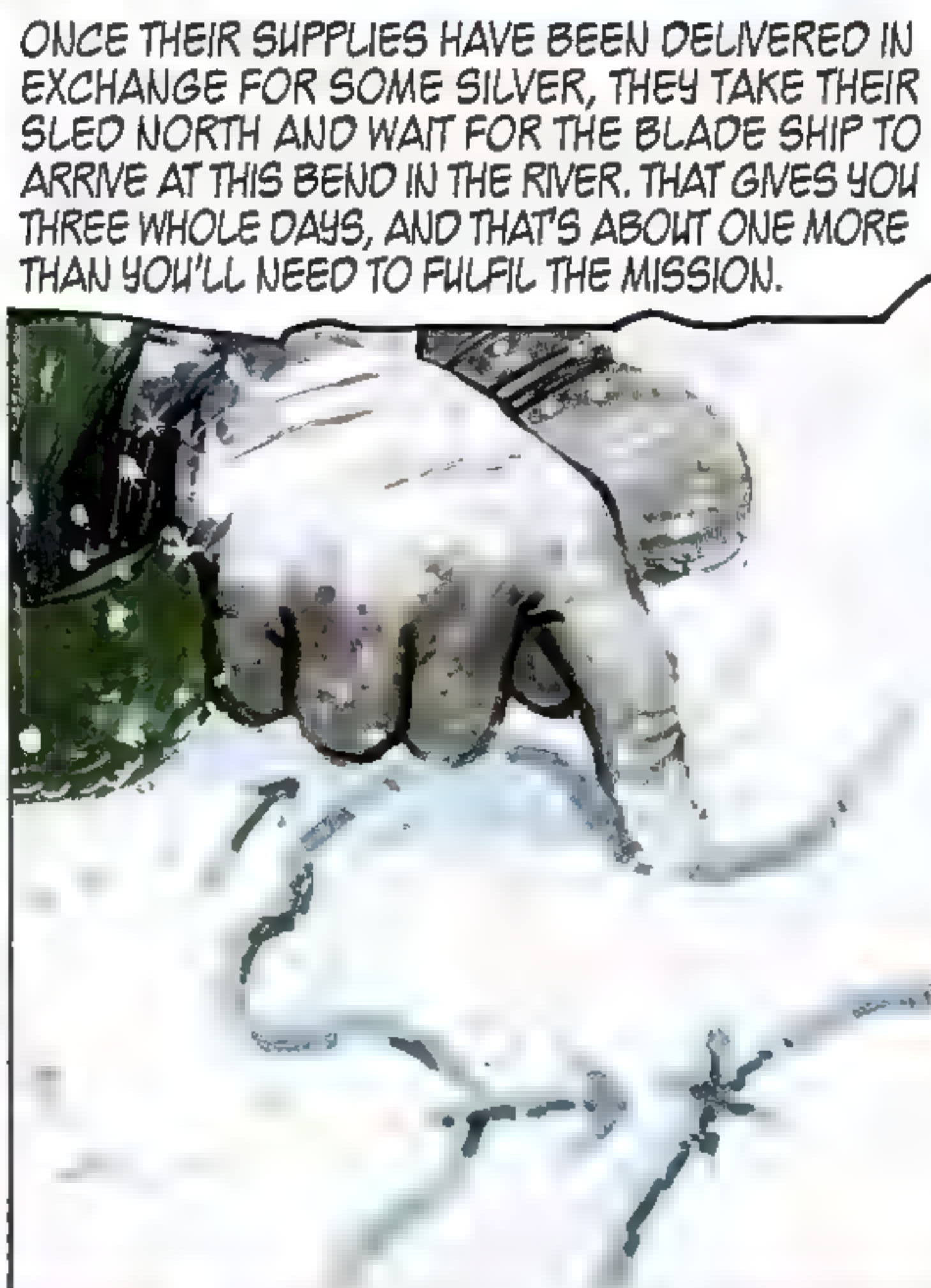
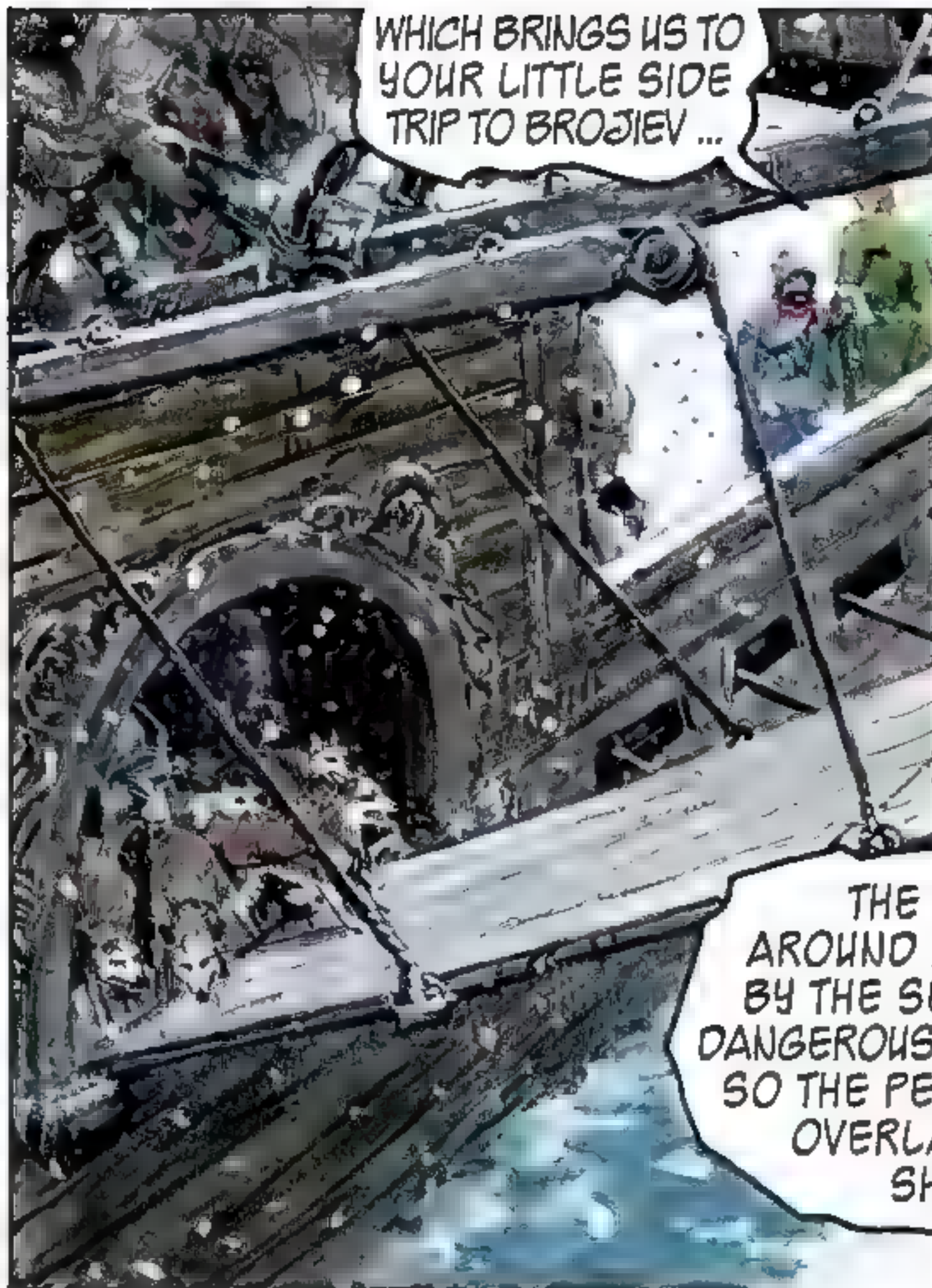
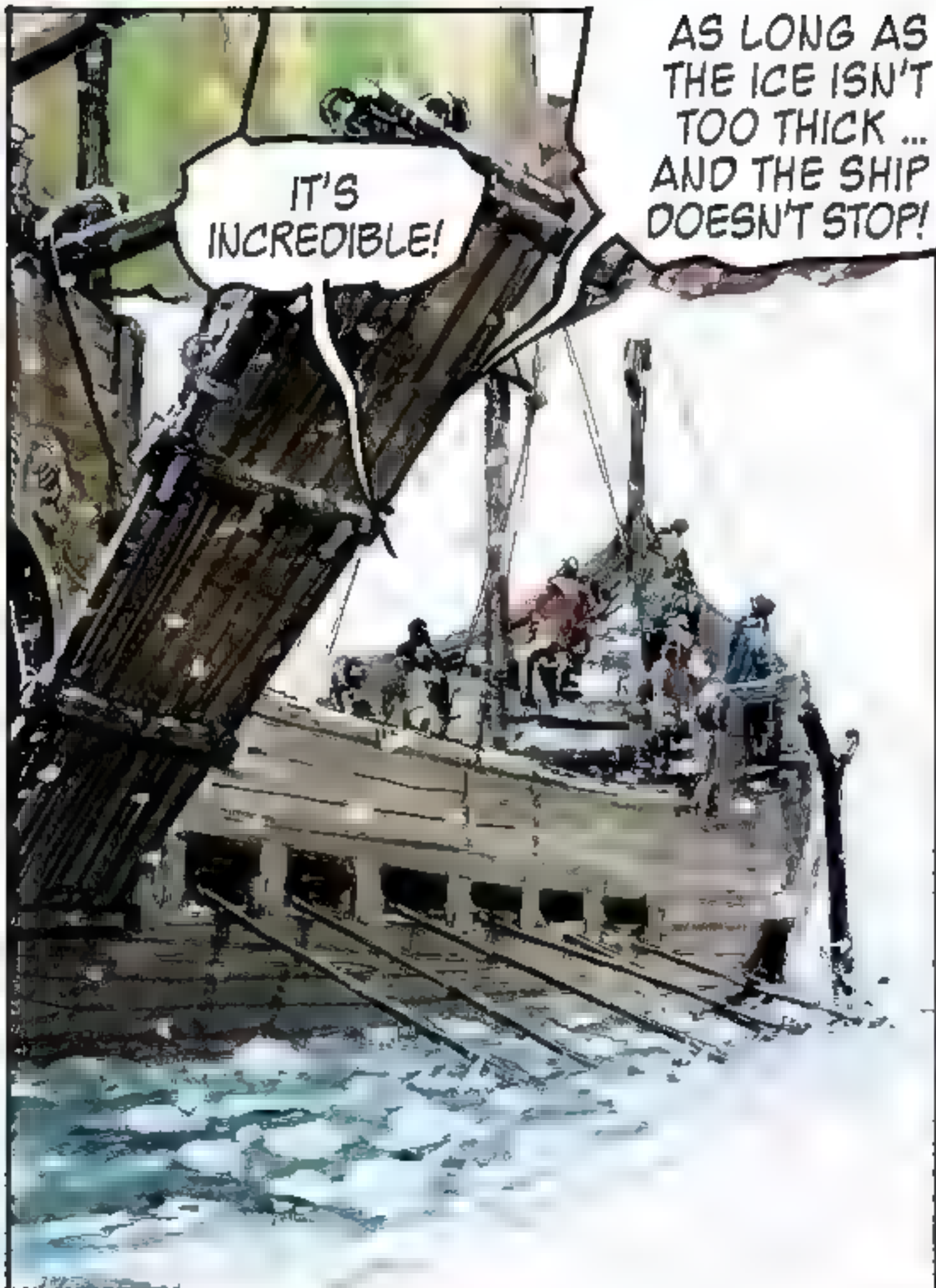


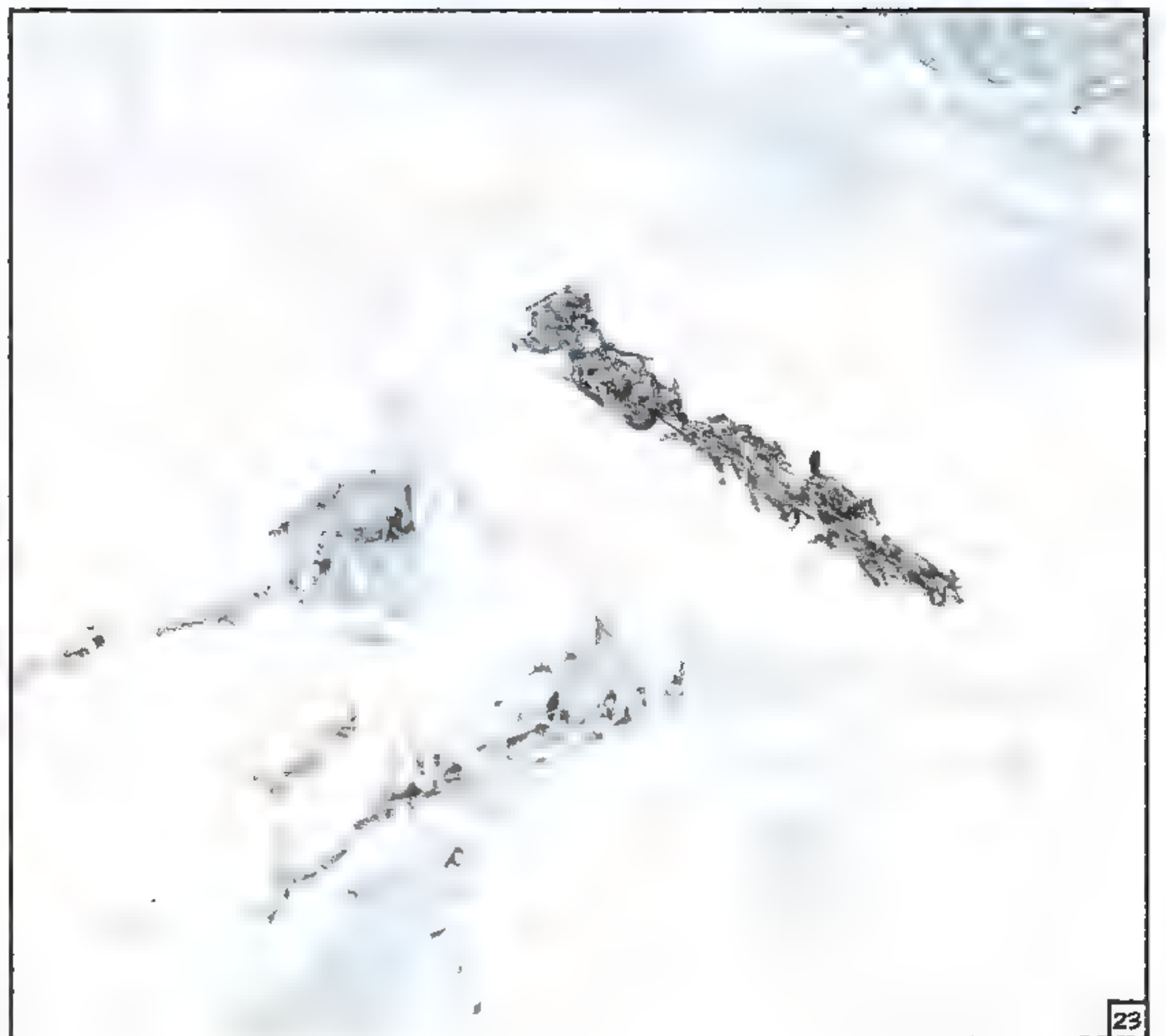
PETROV! I HAVE TO FIND SOME WAY TO BUY LEHLA'S FREEDOM! HOW AM I GOING TO EARN FIVE GOLD CROWNS ON THIS SHIP, THOUGH? YOU HAVE TO HELP ME.



WHAT? WHAT DID I SAY?











THEY'LL BE ON US
IN A MOMENT ... AND
I DON'T STAND A
CHANCE AGAINST
SUCH MASSIVE
BEASTS.



NO
CHOICE ...

YAAAAARH!

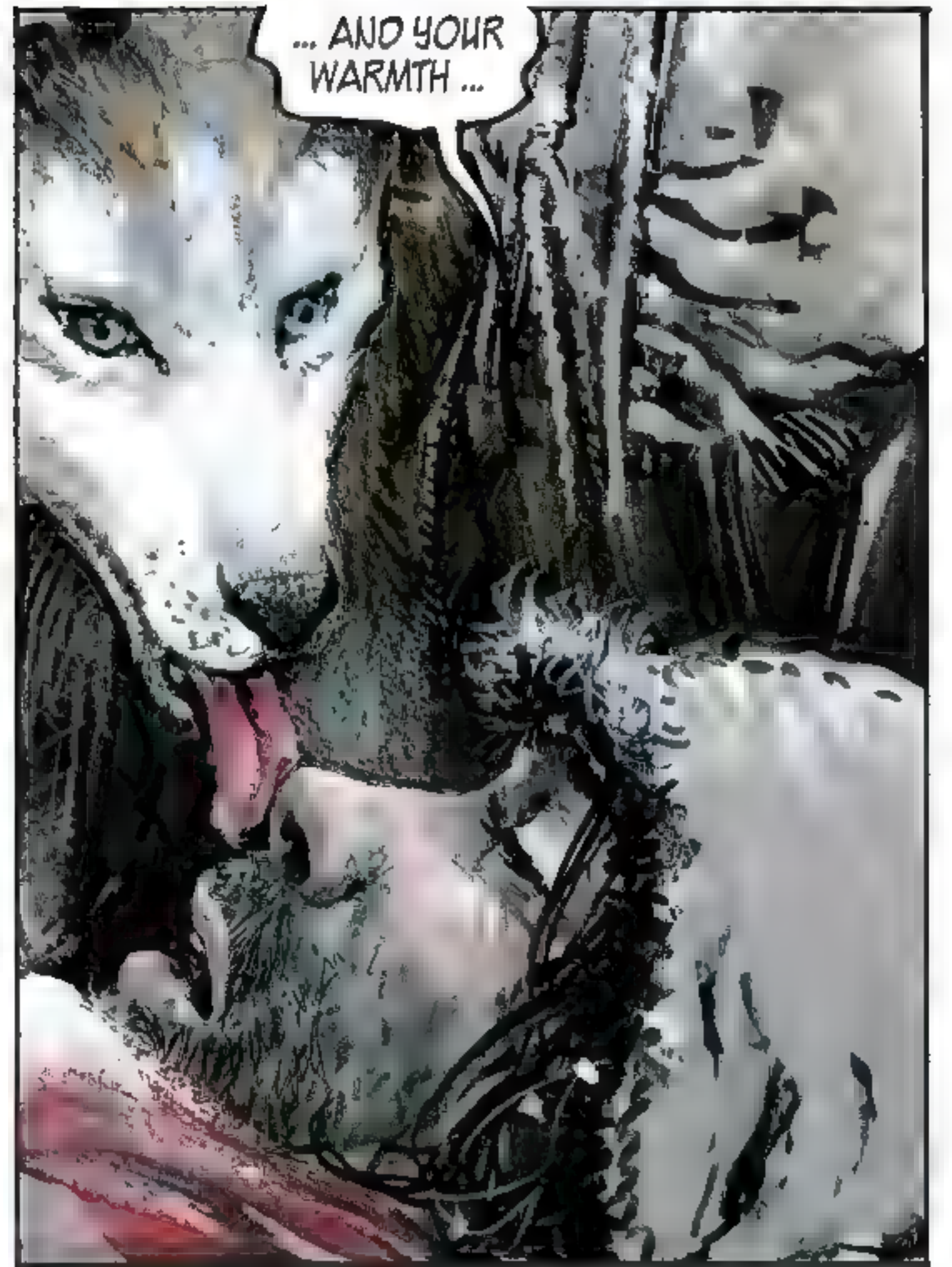








YOU'RE WELCOME,
FRIENDS! WE'RE
SAVING EACH OTHER,
REALLY. WITHOUT
YOUR FUR ...



... AND YOUR
WARMTH ...



DROWSY ... I MUST
RESIST. CAN'T BE
LATE ... FOR THE
SHIP ...



AARICIA, MY
BELOVED ...



CAPTAIN! AREN'T WE
PROGRESSING MUCH
FASTER THAN USUAL?

WE ARE! OUR ROWERS
ARE MAKING GOOD USE OF
THIS OVERLAND STORM PUSH-
ING US FROM BEHIND. GOOD
NEWS FOR YOUR PARTNER —
IF WE KEEP GOING AT THIS
SPEED, HE WON'T HAVE TO
WAIT FOR US IN THE COLD
FOR A WHOLE DAY.



YEAH. ASSUMING
ALL GOES WELL
FOR HIM ...





LISTEN CAREFULLY, YOU. THE SEA IS FLAT AS A MILLPOND. A CHANCE FOR YOU TO BE FASTER THAN YOUR PREDECESSORS. AND REMEMBER: WE WON'T BRING YOU BACK UP UNTIL YOU HAVE THE CHEST.

MERCY...
MERCY!

ASK THE BEAST FOR MERCY,
NOT ME.

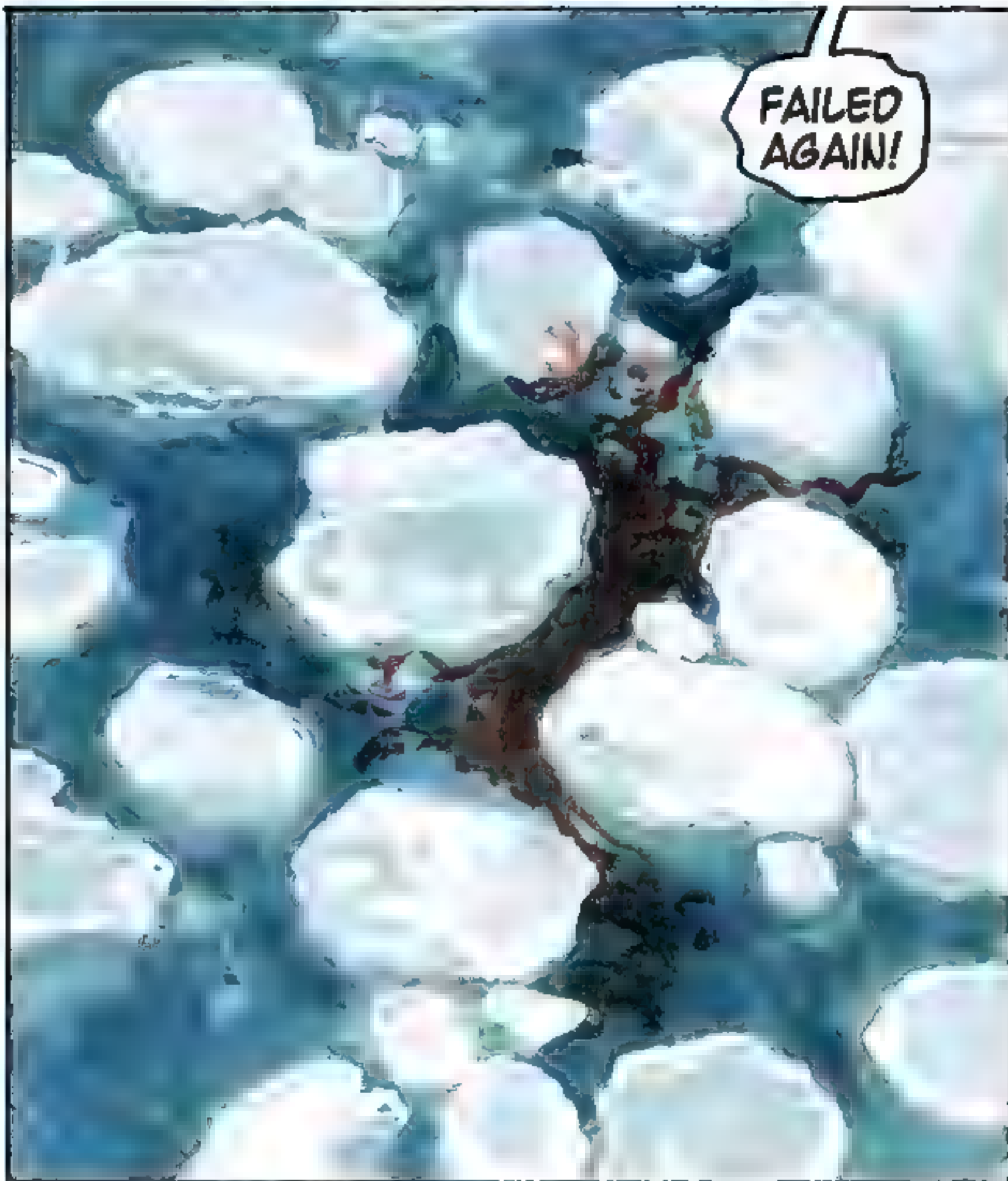
AAAAAAAH!

NO-O-O-O!

SEE
HIM?

WAIT ... I THINK THAT
... YES! HE DIVED
STRAIGHT AWAY TO
AVOID WASTING TIME.

HE'S NOT AS STUPID AS
THE OTHERS. MAYBE HE
HAS A CHANCE ...



FAILED AGAIN!



THAT MONSTER'S ALREADY EATEN FOUR.

IT'S BOUND TO GET TIRED OF THIS ONCE IT'S FULL. BRING ANOTHER!



YOU! SHOW US HOW GOOD A DIVER YOU ARE!

NO! MERCY! I CAN'T SWIM!



HEY, LARS, LOOK! A VISITOR ...



APPARENTLY HE'S A MERCHANT WHO CAME FROM THE RIVER ON A SLED. TOUGH ONE! WE WHACKED HIM GOOD WITH OUR CLUBS, YET IT ONLY TOOK HIM A FEW MOMENTS TO COME TO.

HIS DOGS WERE ALMOST RABID. I HAD TO KNOCK THEM OUT TOO ...

WELL, LET'S SEE IF ALL THAT MUSCLE CAN PROVE USEFUL ...



WHAT'S YOUR NAME, MAN?

THORGAL. WHY DO YOU HURT THESE VILLAGERS? WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH ME?

FOLLOW ME, AND I'LL EXPLAIN THE SITUATION ...

MY LONGSHIP SANK TO THE
BOTTOM OF THIS COVE. WE WERE
CARRYING A CHEST CONTAINING
OUR GOOD KING GUSTAVSON'S
ROYAL SCEPTRE. WE HAVE
TO GET IT BACK. DO YOU
UNDERSTAND?

ARE NONE
OF YOUR MEN
GOOD ENOUGH
SWIMMERS?

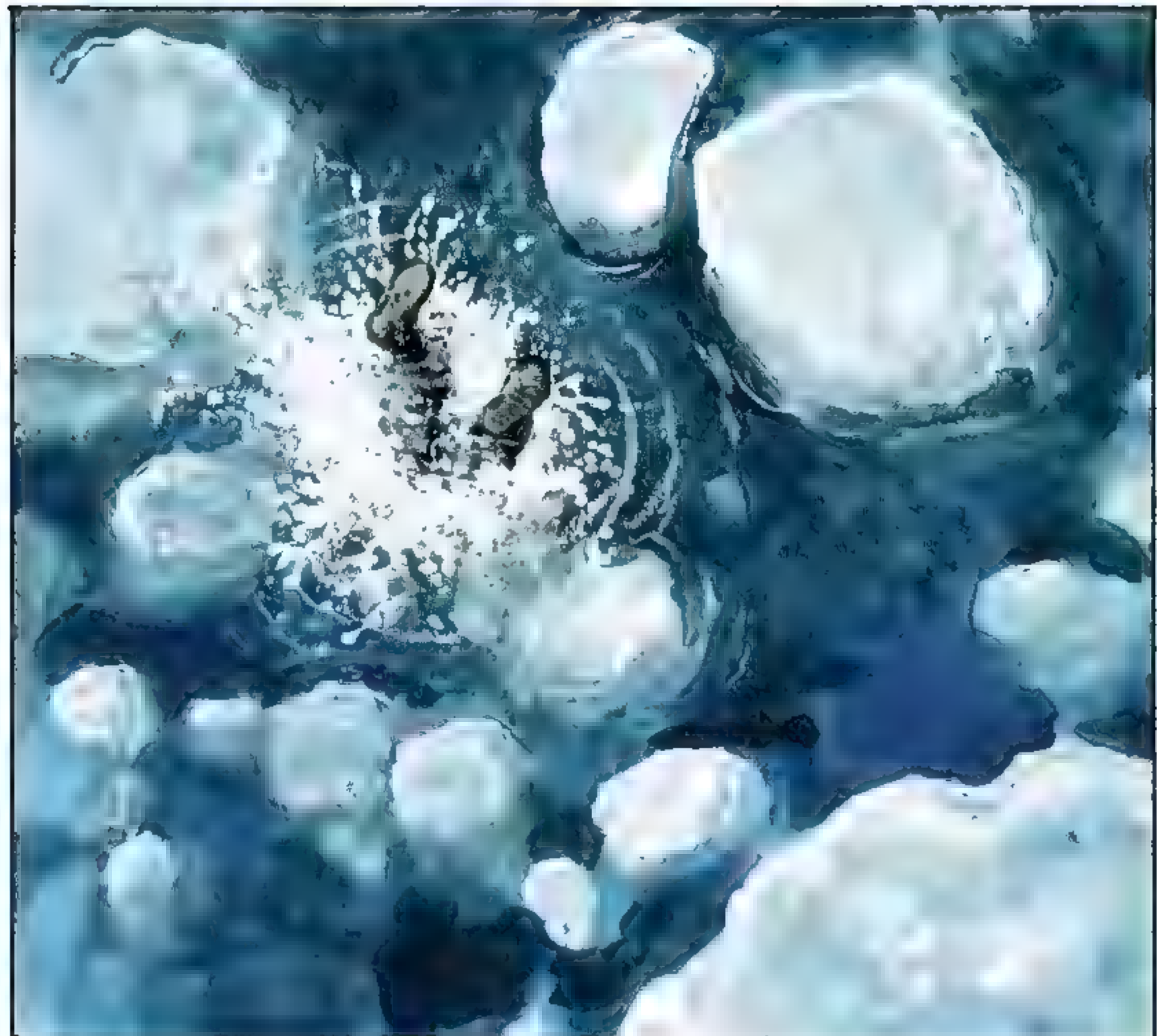
HA! HA! HA! YOU'RE A
FUNNY ONE, MERCHANT! OF
COURSE MY MEN ARE ALL
EXCELLENT SWIMMERS! NO,
THE PROBLEM IS THAT ...

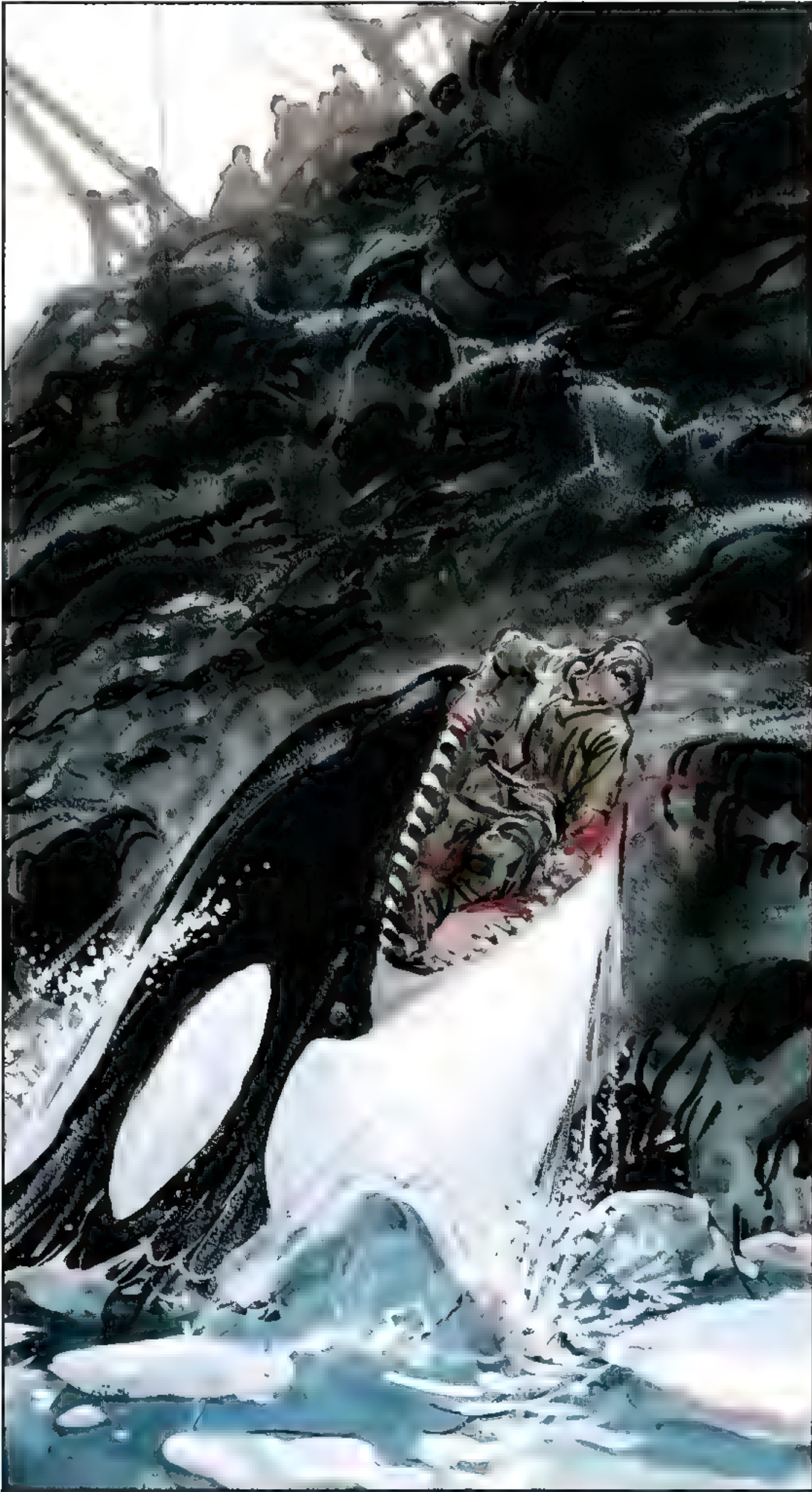


AAAAAH!

... WELL,
LOOK.

NO!





DID YOU SEE? THERE'S NO END TO ITS HUNGER. IT'S NOT A GOOD SWIMMER I NEED -- IT'S HELP FROM AEGIR HIMSELF! ... OR MORE FOOD SO I CAN SATIATE THAT MONSTER!

THAT WOULDN'T HELP YOU. LOOK BEHIND THAT BLOCK OF ICE, IN THE SMALL CAVE.

A CALF! IT'S A FEMALE PROTECTING HER CALF ...

WHICH MEANS IT WILL ATTACK ANYONE WHO COMES NEAR ...

I SEE ONLY ONE SOLUTION, THEN.

YOU! BRING FOUR VILLAGERS.
THE MONSTER CAN'T ATTACK
ALL FOUR AT ONCE,
AND—



WAIT! I THINK
I KNOW A WAY ...



IF THE LIVES OF THOSE YOKELS
MATTER SO MUCH TO YOU, THEN
YOUR WAY HAD BETTER BE EFFECTIVE
AND QUICK. I'M NOT WAITING UNTIL
THE LITTLE MONSTER IS WEANED
TO RECOVER MY PROPERTY.



CAPTAIN!
WE HAVE TO
REDUCE SAIL!



OUT OF THE QUESTION!
THE ICE IS GROWING THICKER.
THANKS TO THIS STRONG WIND
BLOWING FROM THE RIGHT
QUARTER, THOUGH, WE CAN
SPARE OUR ROWERS.

YOU KNOW VERY WELL
THAT AT THIS SPEED,
WE'LL PASS THE
RENDEZVOUS POINT
BEFORE THORGAL
CAN REACH IT.

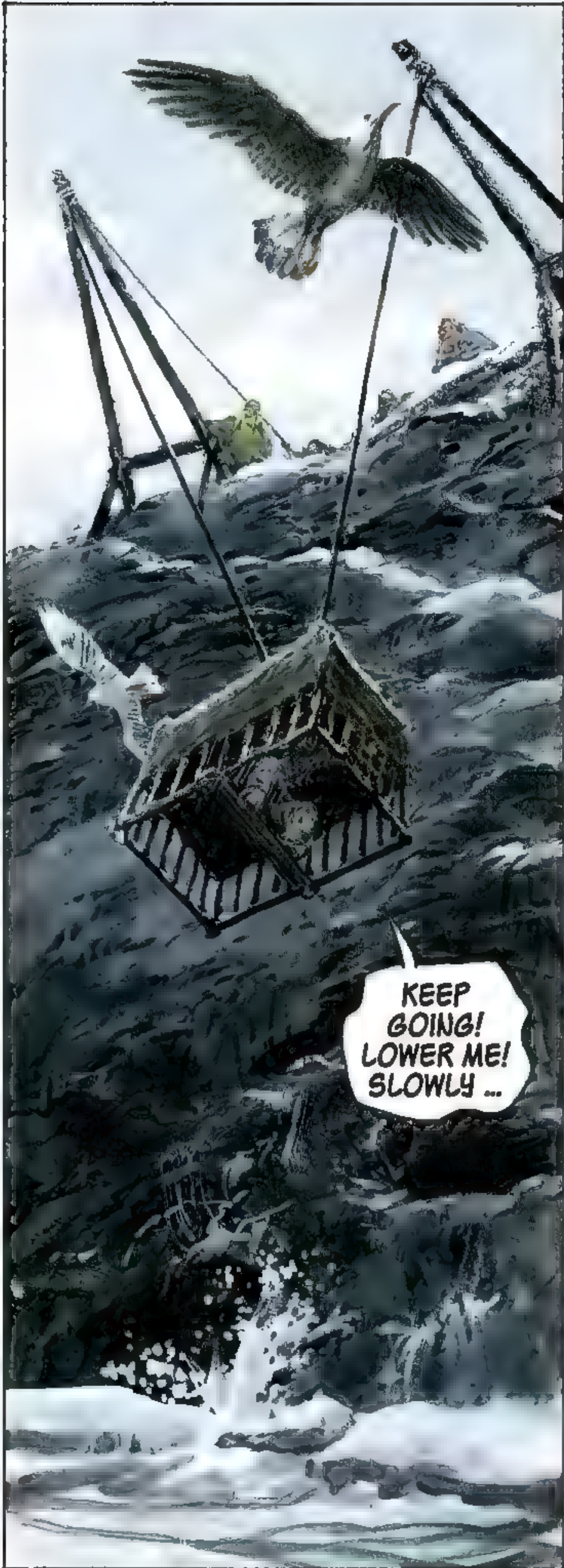


COULD BE NOT
EVERYONE WOULD
MIND THAT ...

I WOULD. SO WOULD
ISSAK THE MERCHANT.
PERHAPS YOU NEED
A REMINDER THAT
TRADE IS WHAT KEEPS
YOUR SHIP AFLOAT ...







KEEP
GOING!
LOWER ME!
SLOWLY ...



STOP! HE'S RIGHT ABOVE THE
SURFACE. NOW WE DROP HIM
ALL AT ONCE, LIKE HE
ASKED. READY?



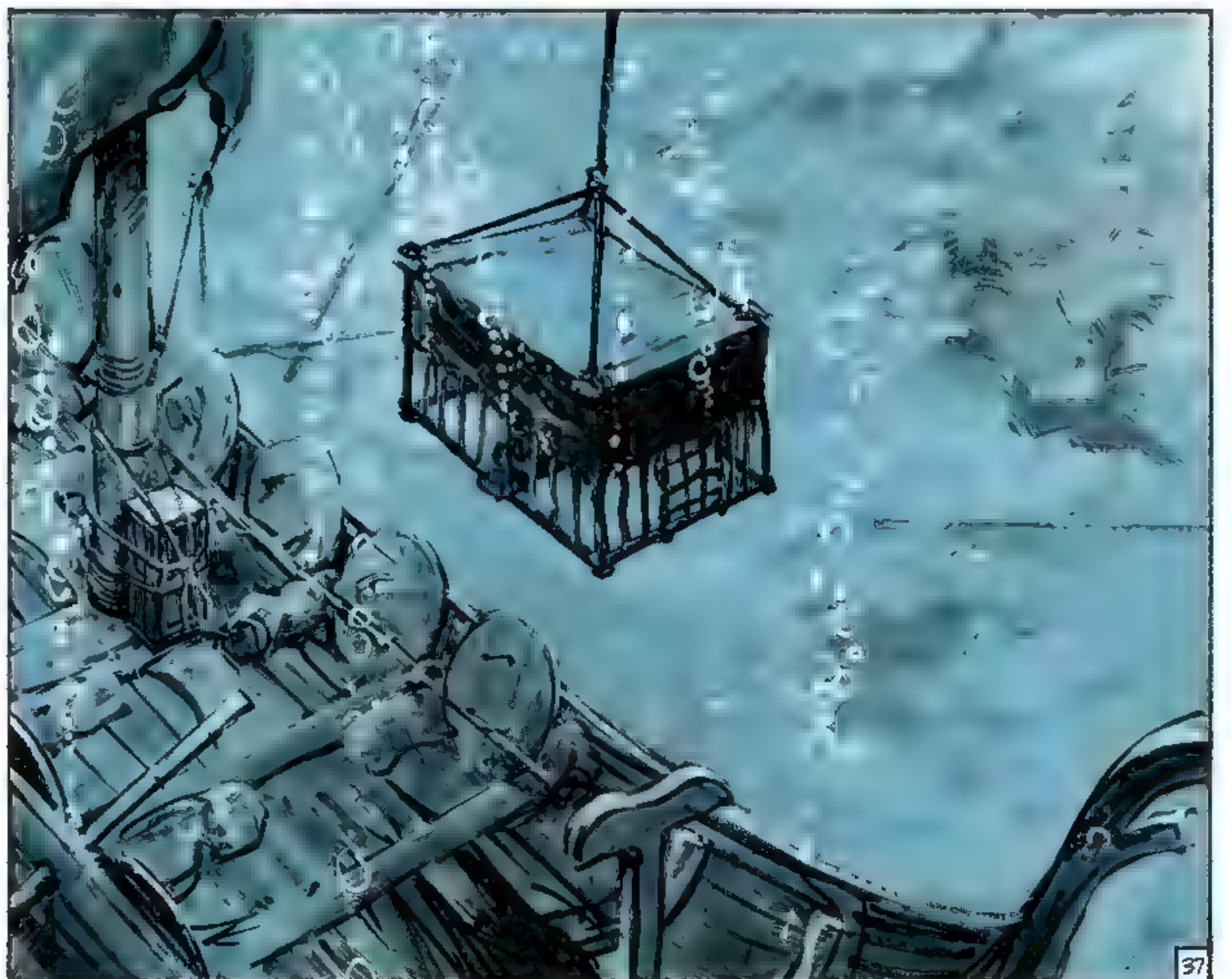
STOP!



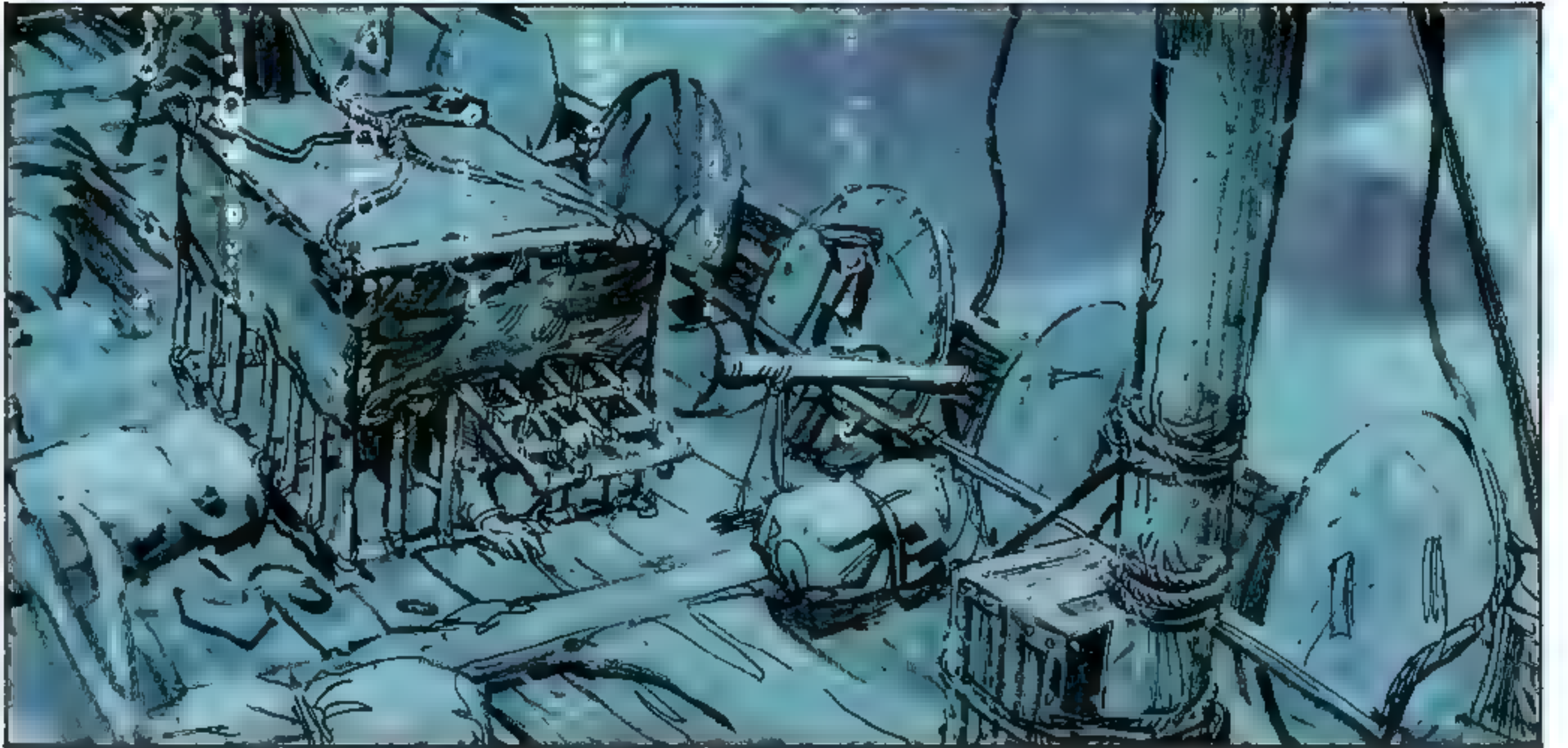
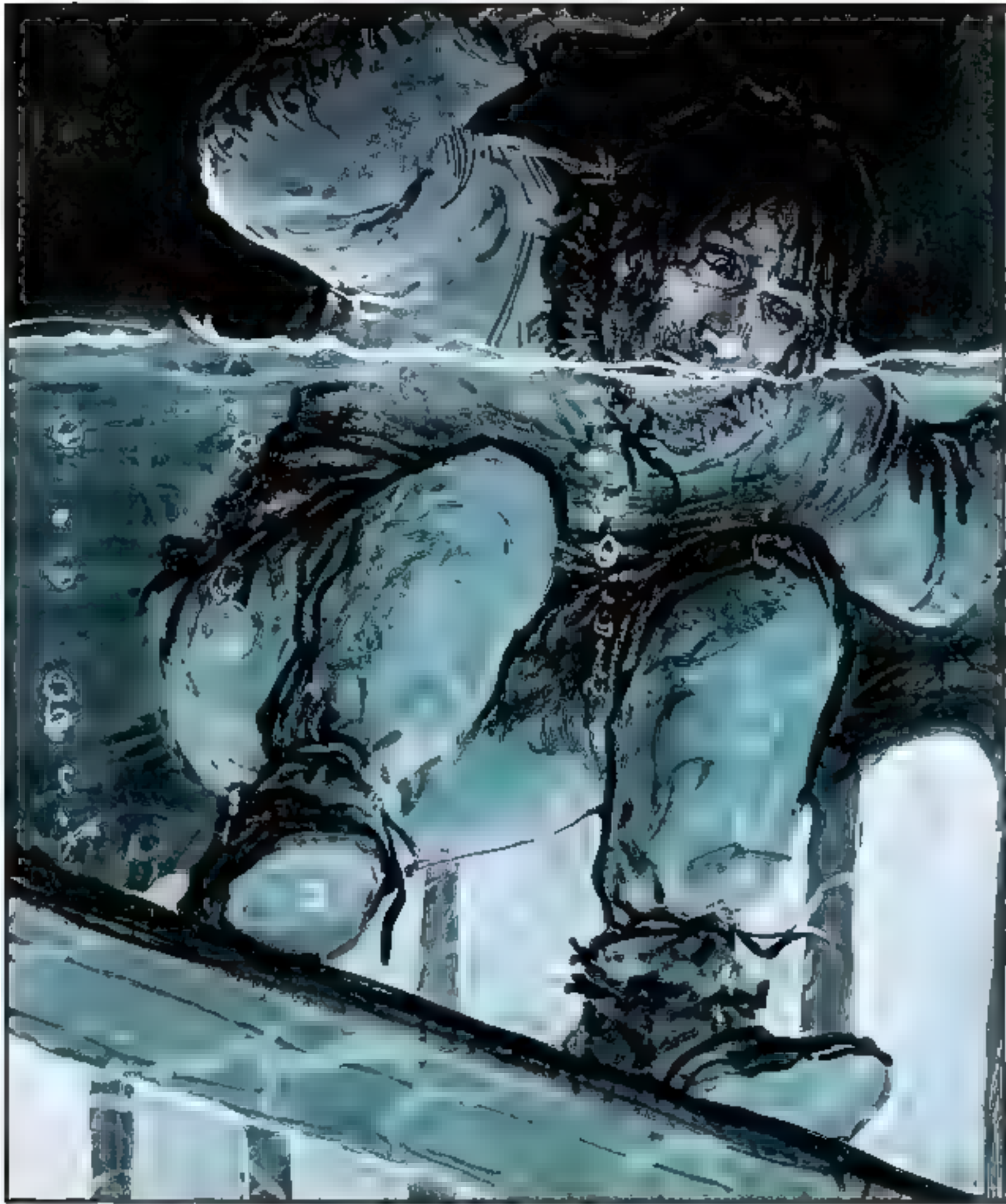
LET GO!



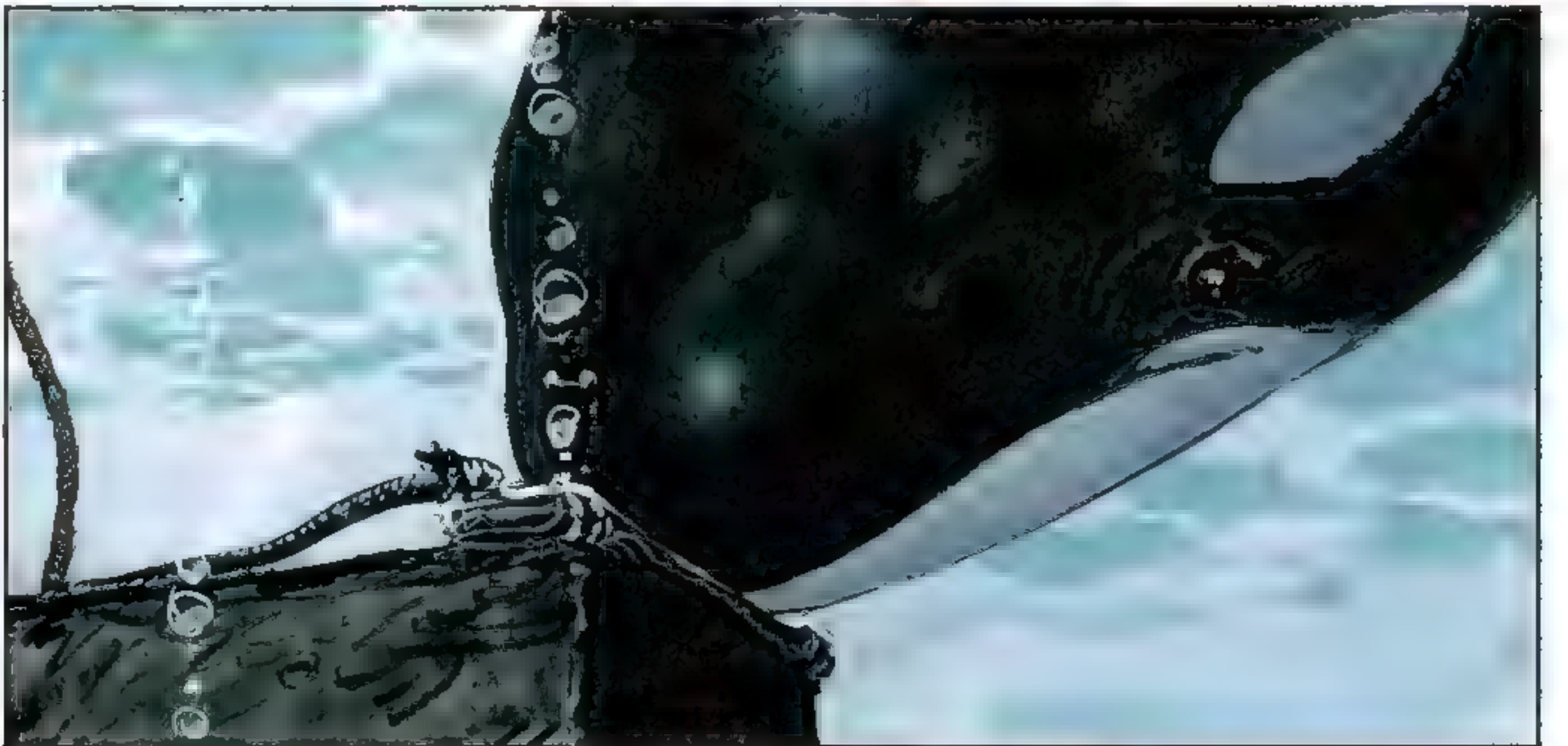
SPLASH



37



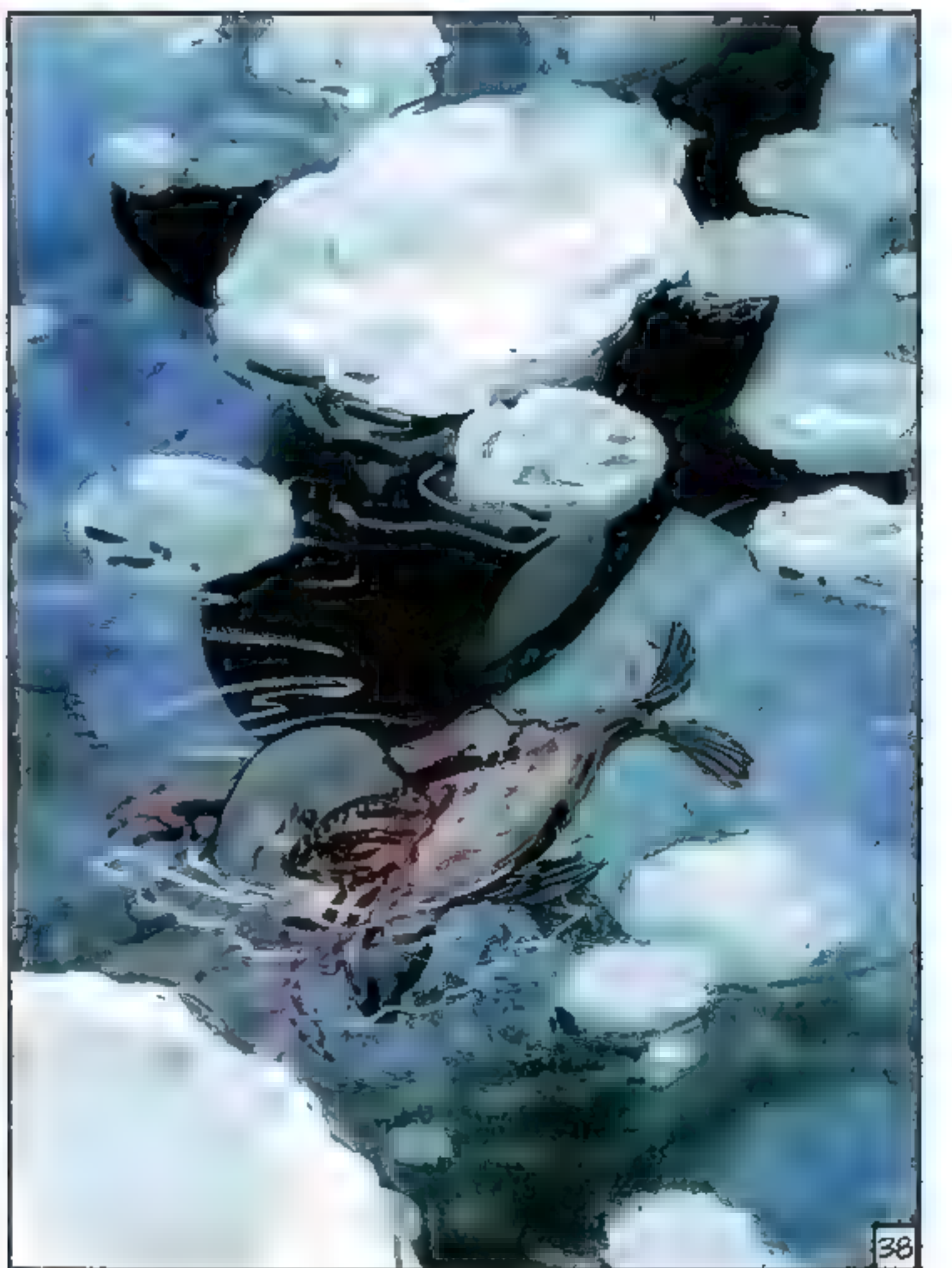
UNDERSTOOD,
YOU LOT? GET
READY, NOW!

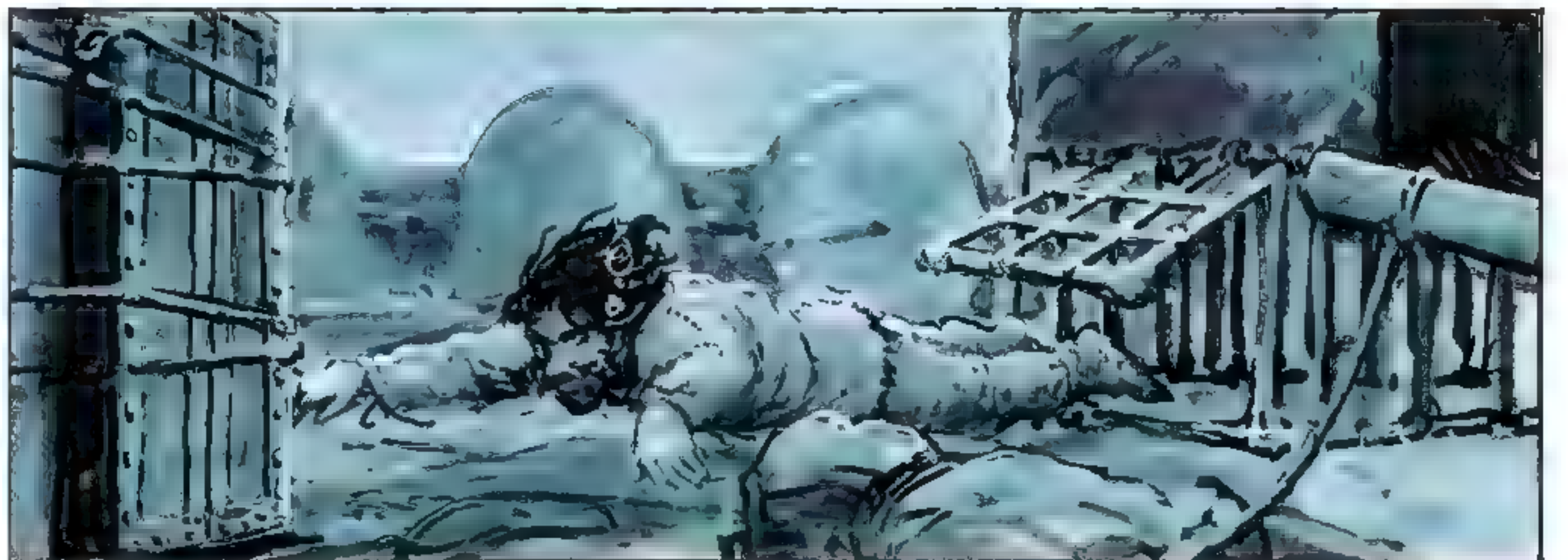
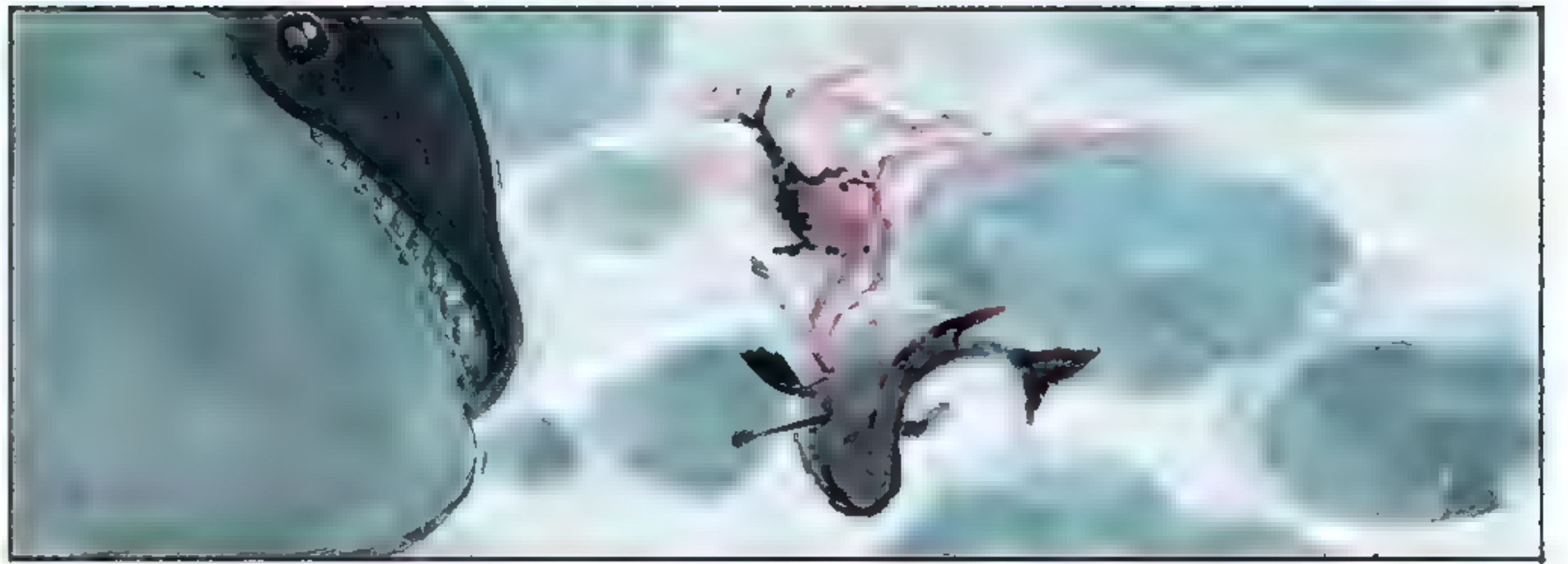


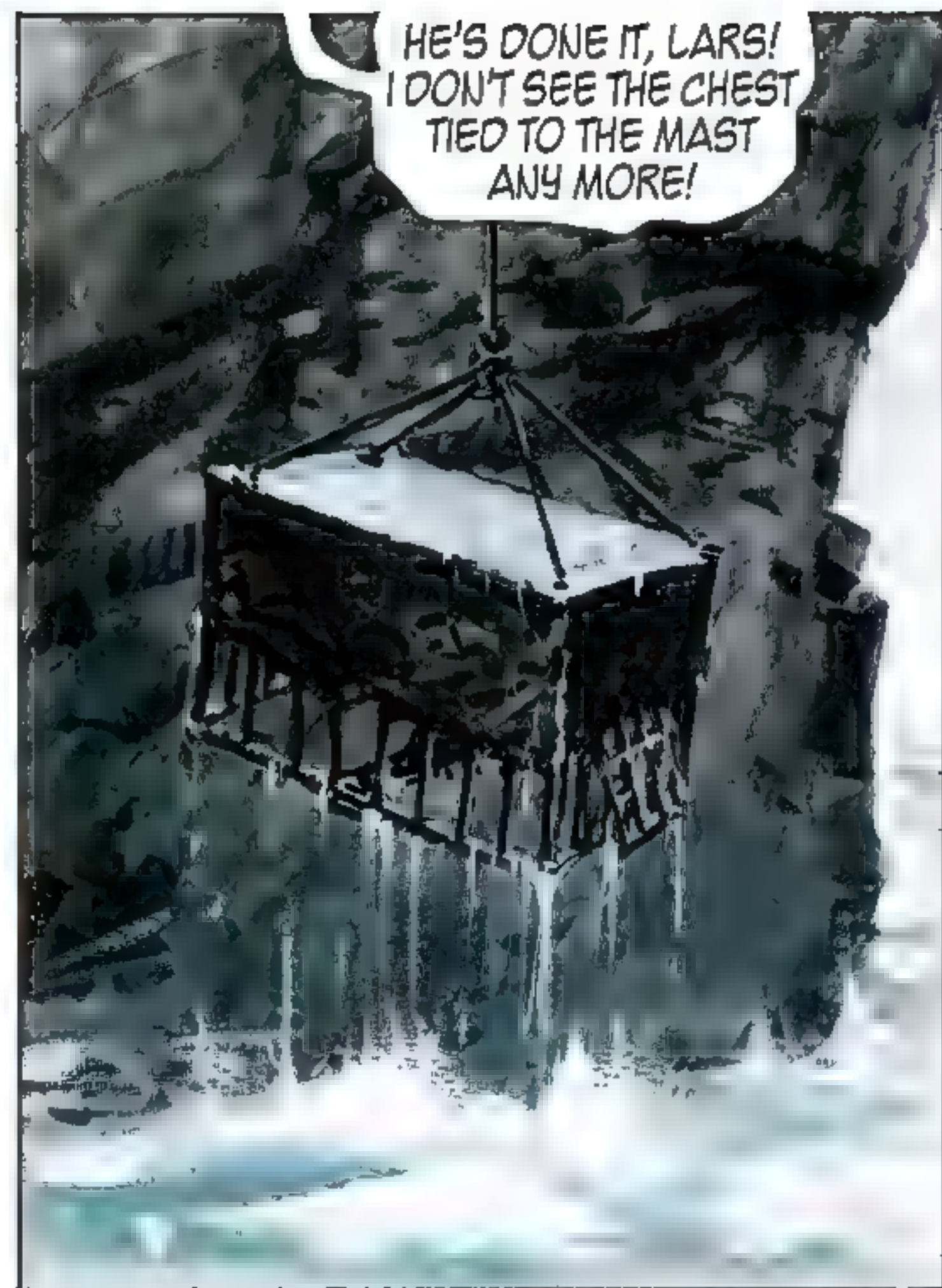
BY THE GODS, WHAT
ARE THEY WAITING
FOR?! ...



REMEMBER: EACH OF
YOUR FIRST ARROWS
MUST BE DEADLY.





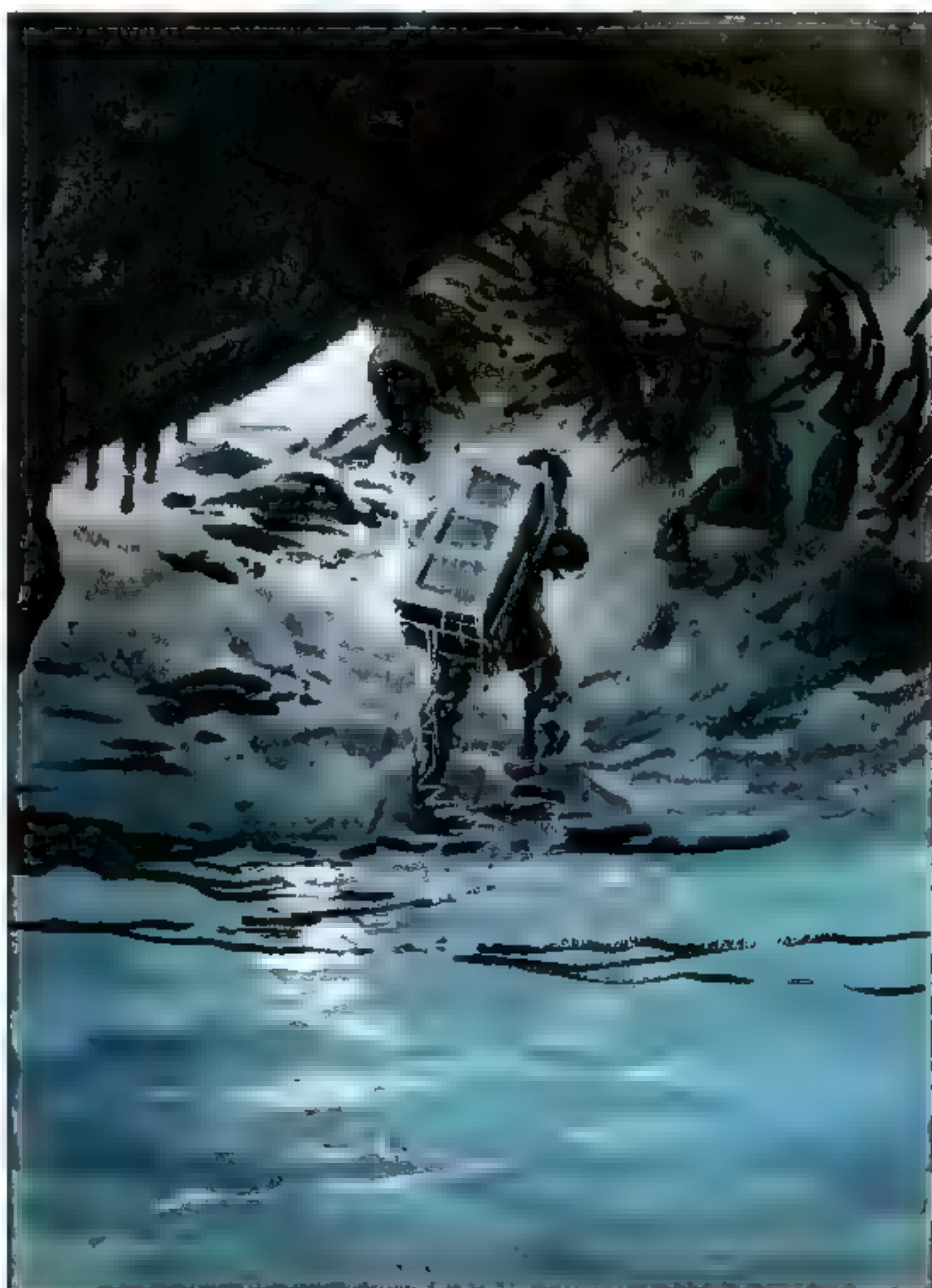


WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? HE MUST HAVE FOUND A CAVE, A TUNNEL ... A CRACK OR SOMETHING! HE'S SOMEWHERE DOWN THERE!



BUT ... THE BEAST IS DOWN THERE ...

AND I'M UP HERE! THOSE WHO OBEY ME WILL AT LEAST HAVE A CHANCE OF SURVIVING ...



THERE! LOOK!

LARS! WE FOUND IT! THERE'S A KIND OF UNDERGROUND RIVER WIDE ENOUGH TO ...



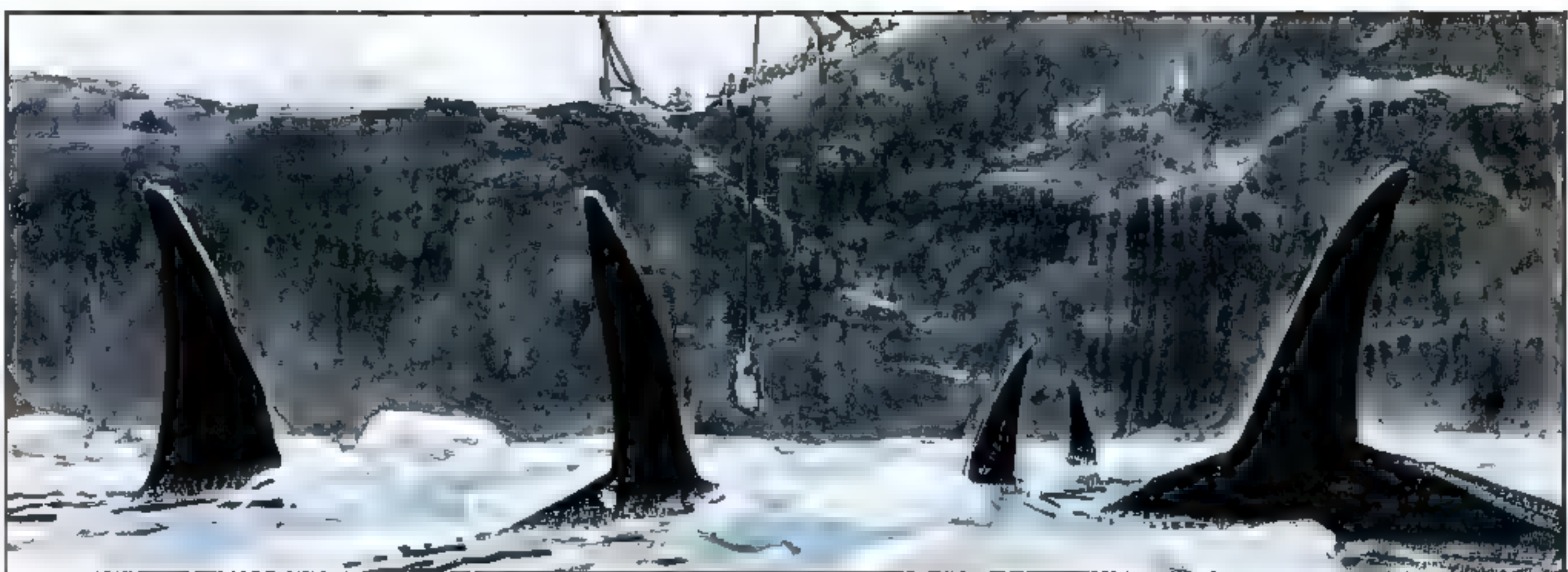
THAT WAY? HOW CAN WE—

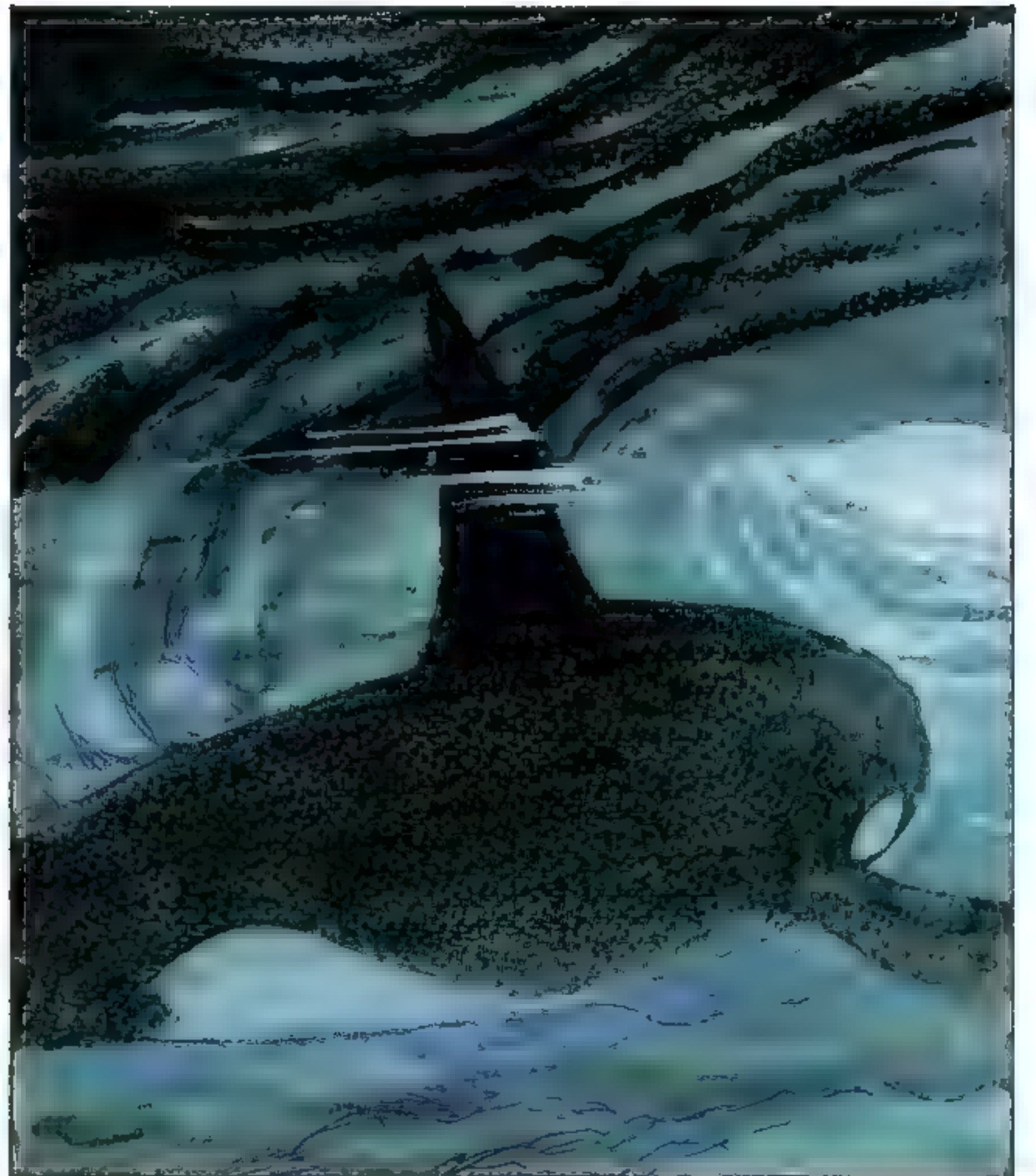
LARS ... LOOK ...

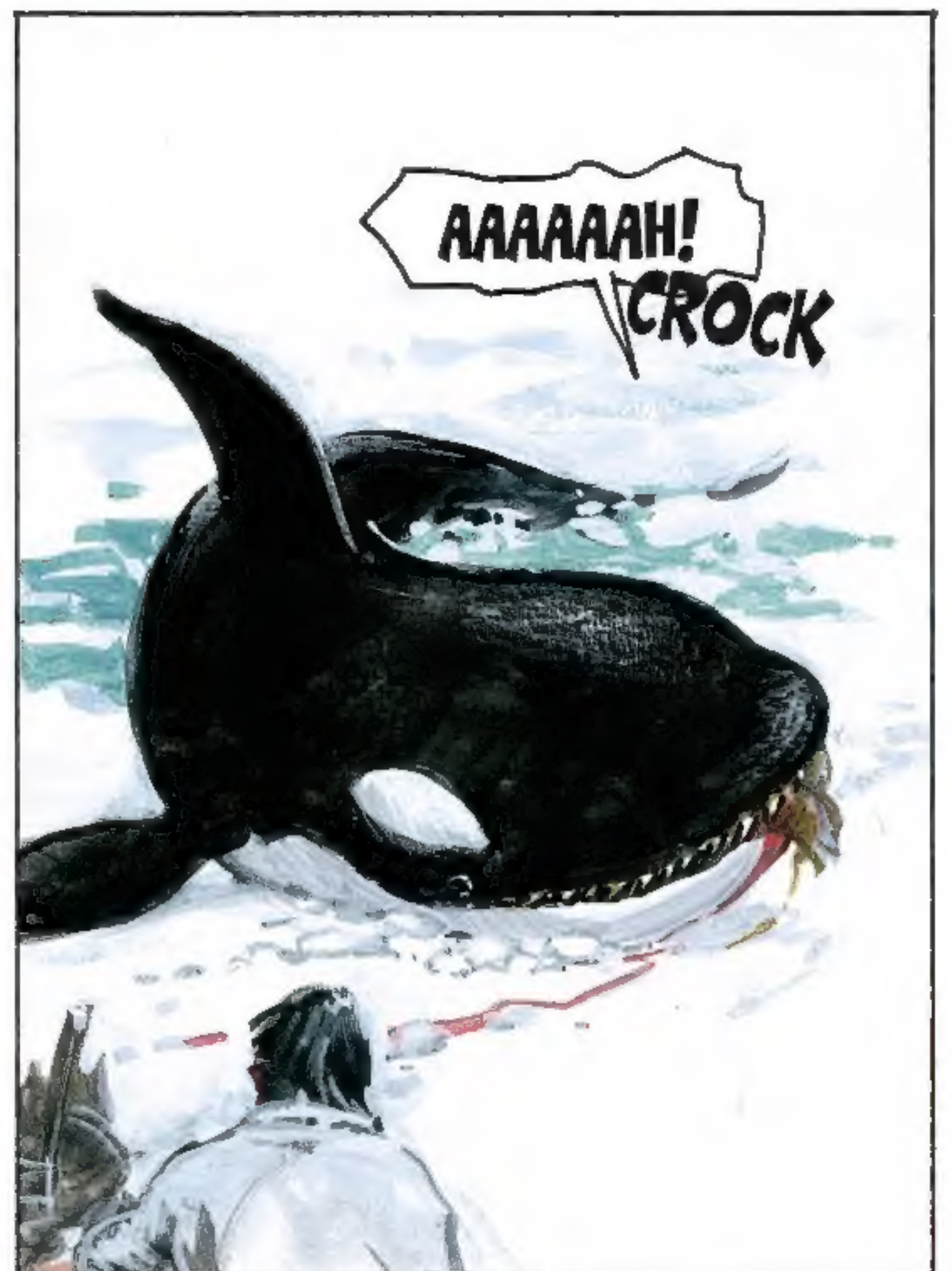


WHAT?! HE ... HE'S ... HE'S STEALING OUR CHEST!



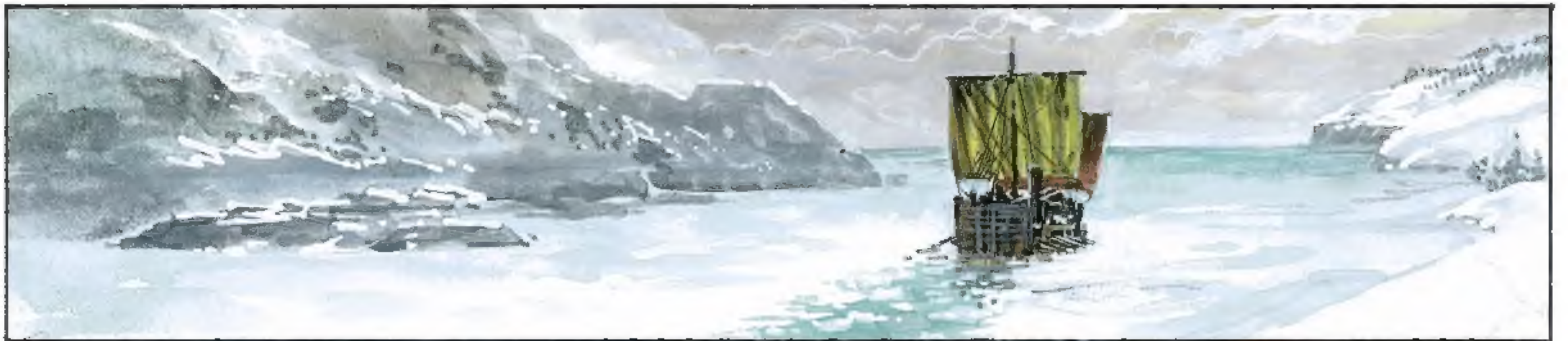




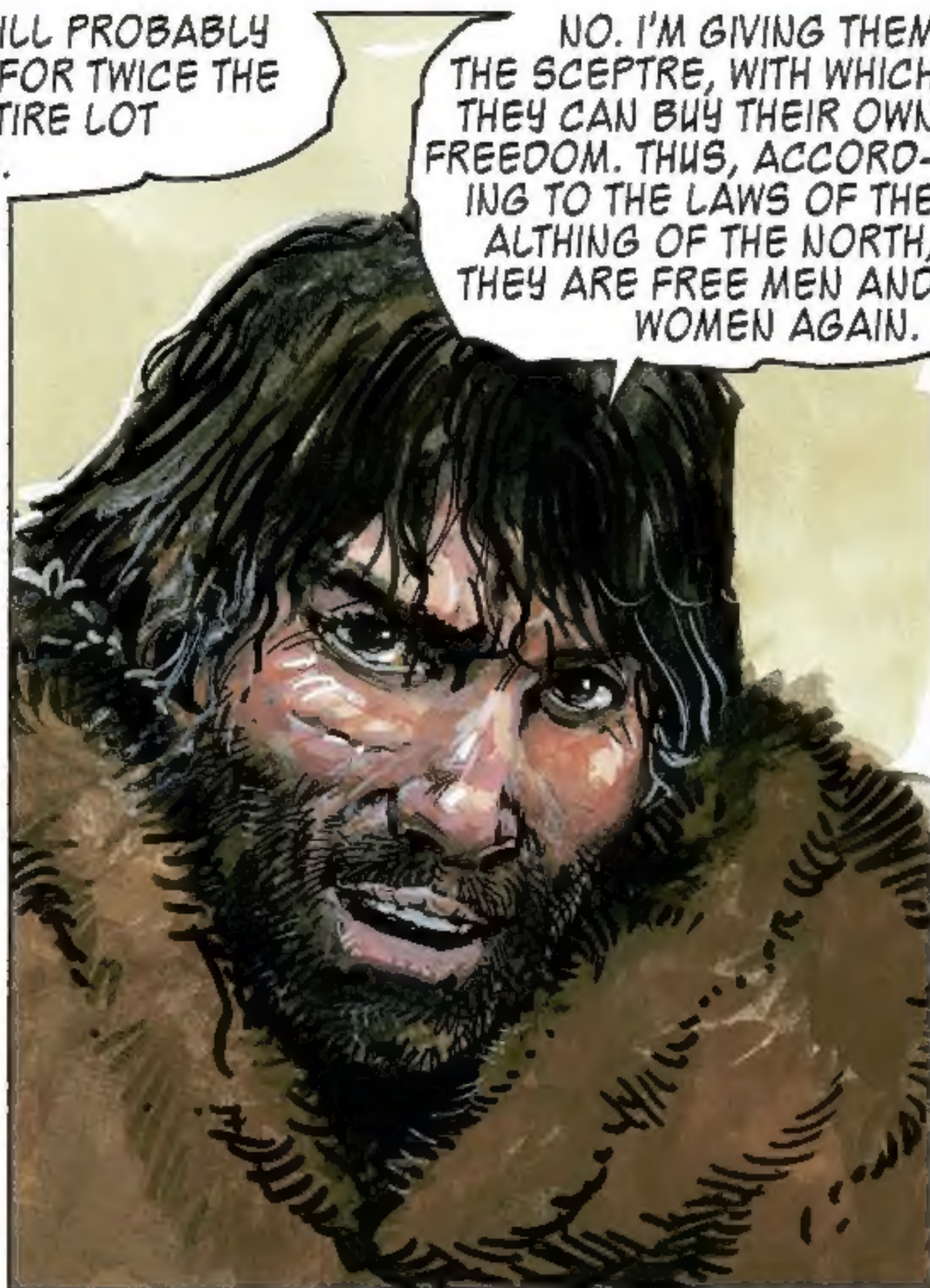




FURS! BLANKETS! GROG!
QUICKLY! AND BOIL
SOME WATER!



THAT KING GUSTAVSON WILL PROBABLY
BUY THIS SCEPTRE BACK FOR TWICE THE
PRICE OF YOUR ENTIRE LOT
OF SLAVES.



NO. I'M GIVING THEM
THE SCEPTRE, WITH WHICH
THEY CAN BUY THEIR OWN
FREEDOM. THUS, ACCORD-
ING TO THE LAWS OF THE
ALTHING OF THE NORTH,
THEY ARE FREE MEN AND
WOMEN AGAIN.





IS IT TRUE?
I'M FREE AGAIN?
FOR GOOD?

YOU'RE
ALL FREE,
LEHLA.



THANK YOU, THORGAL. I WOULD
LIKE TO DO SOMETHING FOR
YOU IN RETURN FOR THIS
GENEROUS ACT.



I AM GRATEFUL, BUT I NEED
NOTHING MORE THAN FOR
THOSE I CARE ABOUT
TO BE HAPPY.



NOT EVEN SOME
INFORMATION ON
THE RED MAGES?
...



THEY'VE CONDEMNED YOUR
SON TO DEATH, YOU KNOW.



LINUX-EMPIRE